

WEEK 11

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The War
of 1812

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1565 to the Present



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Before the War: Jefferson Defends the Louisiana Purchase

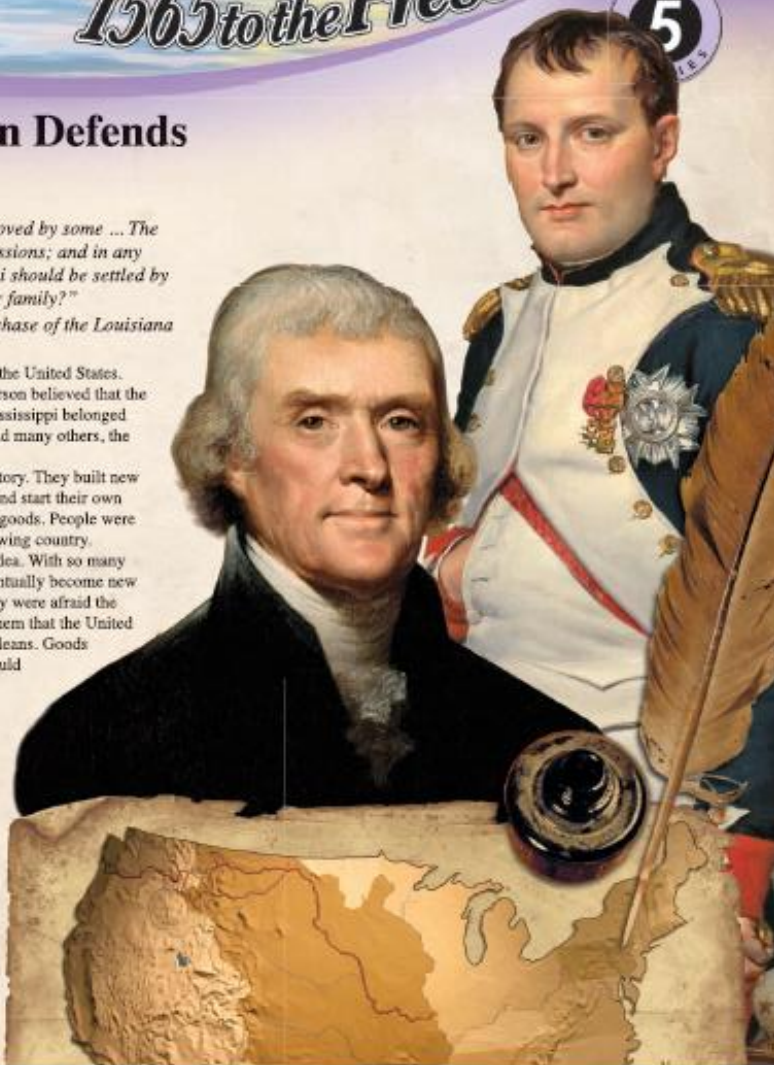
"I know that the acquisition of Louisiana has been disapproved by some ... The larger our association the less will it be shaken by local passions; and in any view is it not better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children than by strangers of another family?"

—President Thomas Jefferson, 1803, talking about the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France

Buying the Louisiana Territory from France doubled the size of the United States. France had needed money, and the United States wanted land. Jefferson believed that the United States would be safer and stronger if the land west of the Mississippi belonged to us instead of a foreign country. To President Thomas Jefferson and many others, the Louisiana Purchase sounded like a win-win situation.

Citizens of the United States moved westward into the new territory. They built new settlements where they had plenty of space to farm the fertile land and start their own businesses. They used rivers like the Mississippi and Ohio to move goods. People were making good livings, and things seemed to be going well in the growing country.

Still, not everyone thought the Louisiana Purchase was a good idea. With so many people moving west, the biggest worry was that the land would eventually become new states. Why did some people think that was a problem? Because they were afraid the eastern states would lose some of their power. Jefferson reminded them that the United States now controlled the Mississippi River and the Port of New Orleans. Goods could be shipped to the port and then out of the United States. It would be good for the U.S. economy. He also said it would be better have our own "brethren (brothers) and children" settle across Mississippi River than strangers. President Jefferson worked hard to stay on friendly terms with foreign countries, especially Great Britain, France and Spain. He knew it was important be able to continue to export goods overseas. (Export means to send something to another place.) And he wanted to stay out of disagreements between other countries. Unfortunately, things did not go exactly as Jefferson hoped, and soon the United States found itself in the middle of a fight with Great Britain. By that time, James Madison was the president. Once again, we were at war with the country from which we had won our independence just a few decades earlier. How did the War of 1812 begin? What happened after the war was over? You'll find out inside this paper!



Connections

Join the Club—Explore the World

Does exploring the North Pole, climbing Mount Everest or landing on the moon sound exciting to you? Members of the world famous Explorers Club have done all these things—and many more!

The Explorers Club was started in New York City in 1904 and has been around ever since. The club's goal is to keep the spirit of exploration alive. It encourages its members to explore the land, sea, air and space and to teach others about science and the world around them. Many famous explorers have belonged to the Explorers Club, including Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb to the top of Mount Everest; Robert Peary, the first person to explore the North Pole; Roald Amundsen, the first person to

explore the South Pole; and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, the first men to land on the moon.

Today, the club has more than 3,000 members in 60 countries around the world. Members of the club plan and carry out expeditions in interesting places around the globe. Each year, the Explorers Club gives special awards from the Youth Activity Fund to high school and college students who are interested in science and who have shown great talent in some way. These students sometimes get to go on special expeditions with members of the club.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Explorers Club, ask a parent or teacher to help you visit www.explorers.org.



Neil Armstrong (left) and Robert Peary (right) are both members of the Explorers Club.



The War of 1812

Rumors of War

Just weeks after selling the Louisiana Territory to the United States, France was at war with Great Britain. The United States quickly made plans to keep doing business with both countries while staying out of the war itself. The United States depended on the money it made selling goods to

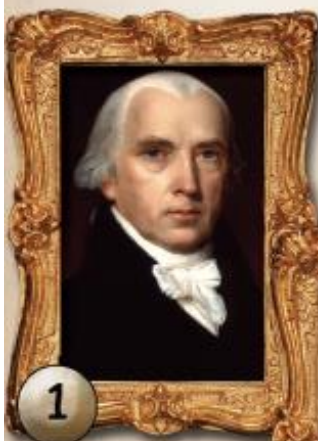
European countries and could not afford to lose any of that business. So we kept selling food to both Great Britain and France.

At first, Great Britain and France were OK with that plan. But soon both countries began to question whose side we were on. Great Britain and France began slowing down and sometimes stopping cargo ships (ships carrying goods) on the Atlantic Ocean. Many times British or French sailors searched the cargo areas of U.S. ships. Both countries wanted to make sure the United States wasn't supplying the other with weapons. Americans wanted to stay out of the war, but that was getting harder to do.

The Embargo Act of 1807

President Jefferson and his advisors decided that the United States had to do something to put an end to the bullying of our ships by Great Britain and France. He believed the United States should stop sending American supplies to both countries. That

would teach them a lesson! So Congress passed the Embargo Act of 1807. An embargo is an order to stop ships from delivering goods. The law said that no goods could be shipped to any foreign port. The United States hoped that both France and Great Britain would be devastated without American supplies. Unfortunately the Embargo Act backfired. The two nations at war were able to get along just fine without U.S. goods. When the deliveries stopped, ships full of rotting food were left in American harbors. The people of the United States were very unhappy, and President Jefferson repealed (cancelled) the Embargo Act. U.S. ships began sailing again, but soon they were again being treated badly by the European countries. British ships continued capturing U.S. sailors and forcing them to fight for the British Navy. This practice was called impressment.



Uncle Sam

Everyone has seen him: A tall, white-haired gentleman with a white goatee on his chin. He usually wears a top hat and always dresses in red, white and blue. Of course, this is Uncle Sam!

Uncle Sam is a symbol that represents the United States of America. No one knows exactly how the character of Uncle Sam came into being, but he probably is based on a man named Samuel Wilson, who lived in the United States early in the 19th century.

According to legend, Samuel was a beef supplier for the U.S. Army during the War of 1812. When Wilson shipped the beef out in barrels from his company in New York, he labeled them "U.S." for United States. One of Wilson's employees joked once that U.S. stood for "Uncle



Culture

Sam" Wilson. Soon Army men were talking about "Uncle Sam's" beef. This led to the idea that Uncle Sam stood for anything related to the U.S. government. Everyone agreed that Samuel Wilson was honest, fair and reliable. They also knew he loved and supported his country.

He seemed like the perfect model for a character to represent the United States.

Did Samuel Wilson the beef packer look like the Uncle Sam character we know today?

Not really. The Uncle Sam character today, an older man wearing a star-spangled suit, is the product of many artists and cartoonists over the years.

Along with the bald eagle and stars and stripes, Uncle Sam is an enduring, or long-lasting, symbol of our nation.

War Hawks Urge Mr. Madison to Start a War

James Madison was Thomas Jefferson's secretary of state. He knew a lot about history and government and was known as the "Father of the Constitution." He also helped write the Bill of Rights. In 1808 he succeeded, or followed, Jefferson to become the fourth president of the United States.

Our nation was not in good shape. The Embargo Act had left the United States feeling angry and upset. People lost a lot of money during this time. They also believed that many problems with American Indians were caused by the British. Everyone wanted the United States to be strong and proud again. Many Americans wanted the United States to declare another war against Great Britain.

A group of Congressmen called the War Hawks convinced Madison to declare war. Congress agreed, and in June 1812 the United States was again at war with Great Britain.

An End to War, But Not to Problems

The War of 1812 ended on Christmas Eve, 1814. Communication was slow in those days, and word of the end of the war didn't reach General Andrew Jackson in New Orleans. There, in early January 1815, he led an army of over 4,000 men. Some were regular U.S. soldiers, but others were frontiersmen from southern states, former slaves from Haiti and even pirate outlaws. They banded together against a British army of almost 8,000. When the Battle of

New Orleans was over, 2,000 British soldiers had been killed, while the United States lost only 13 men. Jackson's victory saved New Orleans even though the war had been over for days. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in February 1815, officially ending the war. What did Americans gain from the War of 1812? Something very important—the reputation as a world power.

Major Events of the War of 1812

- June 1812 — United States declares war against Great Britain
- July 1812 — First battle of the war as United States invades British-ruled Canada
- August 1812 — U.S. troops surrender to British and American Indian forces at Detroit, Michigan
- August 1812 — U.S. ship the USS Constitution defeats the British ship HMS Guerriere
- November 1812 — James Madison re-elected president
- December 1812 — The USS Constitution defeats the HMS Java
- March 1813 — British Navy begins raids in the Chesapeake Bay area
- April 1813 — Americans capture Toronto
- May 1813 — British Navy blockades most middle and southern states in the United States
- November 1813 — British offer to talk peace with the United States
- April 1814 — British Navy blockades New England

- July 1814 — British forces occupy Maine
- August 1814 — U.S. banks and economy in serious trouble while peace talks begin
- August 1814 — The British burn Washington, D.C.
- September 1814 — Francis Scott Key writes "The Star Spangled Banner" at Fort McHenry
- January 1815 — General Andrew Jackson and troops defeat the British at the Battle of New Orleans
- February 1815 — Peace Treaty of Ghent ratified and President Madison declares the war at an end



1. President James Madison
 2. President Andrew Jackson
 3. Andrew Jackson led U.S. troops against the British at the Battle of New Orleans.
 4. The USS Constitution captured five British ships of war in the War of 1812.
- (Background) The British burned the capitol building in Washington D.C.
(Above) U.S. Proclamation of War against England



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The Star-Spangled Banner

The War of 1812 was a complicated one. There were many causes and unclear outcomes. One positive result of this war may have been a feeling of national pride. Americans had proved that the country was indeed a world power. This feeling of patriotism can be seen in "The Star-Spangled Banner," our country's national anthem, which was written during the war.

In September 1814, the United States and Great Britain fought a terrible battle near Baltimore, Maryland, at Fort McHenry. British ships attacked the fort from the harbor early in the morning. They blasted the fort with cannon fire. Rockets whizzed through the air and lit up the sky. The battle lasted through the night.

A lawyer named Francis Scott Key (right) was on a ship in the harbor. He had been trying to help get an American prisoner freed. The British agreed to release the man, but not until the battle at Fort McHenry was over. All night long Key watched and waited for a sign that his nation had won a victory.

At dawn the Fort McHenry soldiers knew they were going to defeat the British. In celebration they raised a giant United States flag and played "Yankee Doodle." Key was eight miles away down the river, but he clearly saw the flag. He wrote the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner" as a poem to remember that night.

The poem was put to the music of a popular song of the day and quickly became a favorite of the people. In 1931 Congress voted to make "The Star-Spangled Banner" the national anthem for the United States of America.



History