

# The War of 1812

American trade overseas increased rapidly after the American Revolution.

## **American Neutrality is Violated**

Britain and France went to war again in 1803. At first, American ships benefitted from the conflict; the British and French were too busy fighting to engage in trade. However, neither Britain nor France wanted the Americans to sell supplies to its enemy.

- Napoleon (France) seized American ships bound for England
- The British stopped Yankee traders on their way to France
- Between 1805 – 1807, hundreds of American ships were captured
- Needing more sailors, the British navy stepped up **impressment** (the practice of forcing people into service). They raided villages and took young men to serve in the Navy. On the seas, they stopped American vessels and seized any British sailors serving on American ships. *They ALSO forced many American sailors into serving in the British Navy, which angered Americans.*
- Jefferson attempted to try an embargo (ban on trade) to solve the problem.
- Jefferson admitted that the Embargo Act didn't work, and Congress replaced it with the **Nonintercourse Act**.

## **The Road to War**

### Conflict with Native Americans

- Native Americans resented the 900,000 Americans who moved west of the Appalachian Mountains between 1790 and 1810. The settlers built farms on Indian lands, hunted their animals, and ignored treaties the United States had signed with the Indian nations of the region. Fighting often broke out.
- In 1794, when Washington was President, Native American forces were gathered at a place called Fallen Timbers. Washington sent General Anthony Wayne; he and his army defeated the Indians
- In 1795 the leaders of the Miamis and other Indian Nations signed the **Treaty of Greenville** in which they gave up land and received \$20,000 and the promise of more \$\$ if they kept the peace.

### Tecumseh's Confederation

- Ohio joined the United States in 1803. Native Americans were still unhappy that settlers continued to push onto Native American lands.
- The Prophet (a religious leader) and Tecumseh (a Shawnee leader) taught other Native Americans that white customs corrupted the Indian way of life.
  - They said Indians were too dependent on white trade goods such as muskets, cloth, cooking pots, and whiskey.
- Tecumseh organized Indian nations into a **confederation**. He impressed white leaders. However, the rivalries between Indian nations kept him from uniting all of the Natives. The **Battle of Tippecanoe** occurred at the village The Prophet built for his followers (Tippecanoe) between General Harrison and the Indians. Harrison won.

## **War or Not?**

Fighting with the Native Americans hurt relations between the United States and Britain.

- The British were supplying the Native Americans guns and ammunitions
- They encouraged Native Americans to attack U.S. settlements

The ban on trade with Britain and France was about to expire. President James Madison made an offer to both nations: whichever nation stopped seizing American ships, the U.S. would stop trade with the other nation. Napoleon (France) quickly took the U.S. up on their offer.

#### Arguments For War with Britain:

- Aside from New England, anti-British feelings ran strong in America
- Members of Congress from the South and the West called for war – known as **War Hawks**
  - The **War Hawks** were stirred by a strong sense of nationalism.
  - They felt that Britain was still treating the United States as if it were a British colony.
  - They were willing to go to war to defend American rights.
  - They felt that if the U.S. went to war with Britain, they could seize Florida from Spain
  - Did not like the British helping Native Americans on the frontier
- The most outspoken War Hawk was **Henry Clay** of Kentucky.
  - Wanted to punish Britain for seizing American ships
  - Hoped to conquer Canada

#### Arguments Against War with Britain:

- President Madison did NOT want war
- Those against war did not want to raise taxes to fund a war
- Those in New England (who wanted to restore trade with Britain) feared that the British Navy would attack New England seaports

### **The War**

In June 1812, President Madison asked Congress to declare war on Britain. However, the U.S. was not prepared for war. Due to Jefferson's decrease in spending on the military, we only had 16 ships. The army was small, untrained, and ill equipped. The British Navy blockaded American ports.

#### War in the West

The War Hawks wanted to conquer Canada. This failed. In the *Battle of Lake Erie*, the American's won a difficult victory followed by a decisive victory over the British and Native Americans in the *Battle of the Thames*.

#### Final Battles

In 1814, Britain defeated France in Europe and concentrated fully on the war with America. They burned Washington, D.C. in August of 1814. First Lady Dolly Madison gathered up important papers of the President and a portrait of George Washington and fled from the White House before the British set fire to the building.

Baltimore – Francis Scott Key, a young American Lawyer, wrote a poem about the Battle at Fort McHenry called “The Star Spangled Banner” which became the National Anthem of the United States

Battle of New Orleans – American Victory. Andrew Jackson becomes a National Hero.

### **Results of the War**

- Treaty of Ghent (nothing was adjusted, nothing was settled)
  - Agreed to restore pre-war conditions
  - Did **not** address impressment or neutrality