



United States History

Name:

Causes of the War of 1812

Section:

Score ____/5

Directions: Using your book (pages 210-211) Answer the following Questions. When finished answer the series of questions with the related readings below.

Define: **Impressment-**

What was impressment and why did it make Americans angry?

Define: **Embargo -**

How did President Jefferson hope to use an embargo? Did it work?

The United States Declares War on England

On 18 June 1812, President Madison asked Congress for a declaration of war against England. Congress complied, though reluctantly. In the House of Representatives, the war measure passed 79-49, and in the Senate 19-13. Northern representatives feared the impact war would have on their shipping interests.

There was legitimate cause for concern entering a war with England. According to a report issued by the Chief of Military History of the United States Army, the Jefferson Administration, apprehensive of a standing army, allowed the military to dwindle. In 1802, the United States sold the majority of its navy and maintained an army of roughly 3200 soldiers. The cavalry had been eliminated. This was not increased until January 1812, six months before the outbreak of the War of 1812.

Question: Was it smart for the United States to declare war on Great Britain? Why or why not?

The United States Invades Canada

Following the declaration of war against England, between 1812 and 1815 the United States made three attempts to invade Canada. The larger American army, comprised largely of militia hastily assembled at the outbreak of hostilities, faced a British Canadian army which, along with Native American allies, was far more professional and better prepared for combat. Although Thomas Jefferson once boasted that invading Canada would be “a mere matter of marching,” the campaigns each ended badly for the Americans. The Americans lost an army at Detroit and another at Queenston Heights. Eventually the losses proved too much and the Americans withdrew from Canada. During the invasions, the American army burned the cities of York, modern Toronto, and Newark. The British would later retaliate by burning Buffalo and Washington D.C.

Oliver Perry became an American hero during the invasion, routing the British in Lake Erie and becoming the first man to capture a British fleet.

Question: Going into the battle what did the Americans think about the invasion of Canada? Did it turn out to be what they expected?

The British Burn Washington

The British first pressed their new advantage in North America with an attack on Washington D.C. On 24 August 1814, the British defeated the Americans at Bladensburg and were, from there, able to march unmolested into the city. Most residents of the city, including President and Mrs. Madison, fled the British advance. The White House was abandoned with such haste that the arriving British soldiers found dinner prepared the dining room set for forty guests.

With only four thousand troops, the British had no interest in occupying or holding the city. Instead, in retaliation for the Americans burning York, modern Toronto, the British burned all of the public buildings in the city. Of all government building in Washington, only the Patent Office was spared destruction.

Question: Why did the British want to burn down Washington D.C? What impact do you think this had on American morale?