

# Burning down the white house

Life



On August 24 1814, during the War of 1812 we traveled from the Atlantic Ocean, into Chesapeake Bay, and on into Washington D. C. . The British Army occupied Washington, D. C. as I and some others set fire to the White House. I was so nervous; I knew it was something I had to do though. It was our commander's orders to only burn public buildings. This was the first time that a foreign power captured and occupied the United States capital. After we set fire to the buildings we left as quickly as possible.

This attack was an act of revenge since the Americans burnt York and the buildings of the Legislative Assembly during the battle of York in 1813. The commander told us that attacking Washington would have a greater political effect than any other states would. It is considered against the civilized laws of war to burn a non-military facility and those Americans not only burned the Parliament but also the Governor's mansion, private homes, and warehouses. We didn't know it but, the president's wife was in the white house. Her name was Dolly Madison, two messengers came in and asked her to leave.

She left all of their personal belongings, but she managed to get the cabinet papers and the portrait of George Washington. As we went into the White House we were greeted with a dinner set for forty. We ate and drank until we were full, then we done our job. We destroyed the White House and all of the public places we intended to destroy. The Madison's had no choice but to leave, and as they left I seen them helplessly watching us demolish their home. I had to keep reminding myself why I was doing this, in an act of revenge because they burnt us down and payback came their way.