

Essay on the american war of 1812

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The American war of 1812 is also known as the second war of independence. Historians refer to it as the forgotten war. The war of 1812 was between the United States and Britain. Canada, which at the time was known as British North America was involved in the war after U. S invaded it in an attempt to weaken the influence of Great Britain in North America.

The war was not caused by a single factor but rather a series of situations which increased the agitation for freedom and respect in America. British's infringement of America's sovereignty is often pointed out as the main reason why the war broke out. The Napoleonic wars in Europe between the French and the British had affected U. S trade. The U. S had been involved in trade with both adversaries in the past. However, trade activity between the U. S and either power was considered a threat to the opposing power. The French and the British did not want supplies reaching the enemy force and hence they would seize American ships and interfere with American ports. The British pushed into law several trade restrictions on neutral powers including the requirement that any neutral power should obtain a license before dispatching ships to any part of Europe for trade. The British used these restrictions as an excuse to search American ships and search them for illegal trade material or any deserters from the British Royal Navy. The Americans were insulted by these actions and demanded for the cessation of such behavior in treaties signed in 1802. The French formally stopped the attack on U. S ships in 1804. However, Britain did not cease to do so. The British continued to capture American ships and would force the American crew members to work in the British ships. The Chesapeake Bay incident sparked outrage in America. The British had fired upon and American vessel,

the Chesapeake when it defied the orders of the captain of the British ship HMS Leopard. 3 crew members on the Chesapeake died, scores were injured and the survivors forcefully put to work on the HMS Leopard. This behavior of the British was the major cause of the war. President Madison argued that America will do anything to have its dignity restored even at the cost of war. Second, the British did not support America's determination to expand her territories. American settlers wanted to occupy the Midwest Native Indian Americans lived. The British instigated the native inhabitants to resist any attempts by American settlers to install themselves in their regions. The British offered to support the Native Americans in this cause with money, arms and support troops. This tension between the Indians and the Americans culminated in a war known as the Battle of New Orleans. The American military, under Andrew Jackson was successful in this war. The Indian and British side lost over 2000 soldiers. The American side had a little over 20 casualties. This war encouraged the American Congress to pass a bill which would allow the government to spend 2.5 million dollars on reinforcing the American military force.

Lastly, these tensions between the British and America ignited a desire for plunder among several congress men who were known as the War Hawks. These congressmen, among the Henry Clay, wanted America to stamp its authority in Canada and to further resist any British influence in America. The assertions of the War Hawks were propped by Major General Dearborn's analysis of intended military action against the British. According to Major General Dearborn, America could easily capture the states of Upper Canada because the British were preoccupied with their war against the French

because the British were preoccupied with their war against the French in Europe. President Madison received majority support from the Congress and the Senate and signed a declaration of war on June 18 1812.

The war lasted two years. The first effect of the war was the numerous losses of life and property. Ironically the terms of the treaty of Ghent brought both power to agreement both powers that they should end the war and restore everything as it was earlier which is codified in the term " status quo in antebellum. The American side reported deaths and casualties of over 10, 000 while the British side suffered a blow of more than 8000 soldiers either dead or wounded. The loss of property was massive. The most regrettable being the march of the British army into Washington in 1814. Major buildings were burned down including Capitol and White House. A lot of property was looted from the White House and surrounding buildings including a portrait of George Washington.

However, the economic gains made after the war were bountiful. The trade blockades which were put in place were lifted by the British. This allowed for a large volume of Trade between the two countries. The U. S exports were successful in making capital gains. This growth in agro economy inspired the development of new inventions such as the spinning jenny. In addition, the profits made from trade flowed mostly in New England. Several industries grew due to this boom.

Politically, the U. S was able to expand its territory. After the defeat of the Native Americans in the Battle of New Orleans, the Native Americans failed to put up any further resistance to U. S attempts to occupy their land. In addition, the Federalist Party, which had opposed the war due to trade

interests with the British in New England, waned in popularity and ultimately collapsed. Americans were then fully committed to Republicanism.

Canada benefitted from the war of 1812. Canada was known as British North America at the time. The provinces of Canada became united. The war was the foundations of its growth as a nation. The theory behind Canada's newfound confidence was that the Canadian militia realized they could fight off the American forces without any help from the British. The British were too distracted in their war with the French in Europe to offer any substantial help in British North America. The American had banked on this advantage but unfortunately lost.

Lastly, America gained self-confidence and self-identity as a nation that could do better without any interference from Europe. The initial complaints of impressments and naval bullying were not directly addressed immediately after the war but the British ultimately recognized the independence and sovereignty of the United States. The battles had not been won but the U. S's objectives of gaining respect and freedom were met. The ' Star Spangled Banner', a poem which was composed by Francis Scott Key during the second war of independence was later recognized as the official national anthem for the United States in 1931.

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