

United or We Will Fall

The War of 1812
A Chronological Analysis

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those relentless teachers, who, without ever expecting anything in return, change the lives and futures of children each and every day.

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1 CAUSES AND CONDITIONS

“If nations go to war for every degree of injury, there would never be peace on earth.”

— Thomas Jefferson

Within its first one hundred years, the United States went to war on four separate occasions during the nineteenth century alone. The War of 1812 was the first of the 1800s’ wars, and it is also the most vague and difficult to understand. Multifaceted political disputes regarding trade restrictions and openness conceal the war’s origins and the actual objectives of its two players—Great Britain and the United States of America. Not only did the War of 1812 begin ambiguously, it was fought elusively, too. In the end, even its winners and losers remained undeclared.

Termed the “forgotten conflict” due to the fact it has been overshadowed by the Civil War era, the War of 1812 was nevertheless a central turning point for the United States. Internationally speaking, it transformed the young nation’s reputation, legitimatizing its place on the global stage. During its formational years, the war forever altered domestic American politics as it considerably transformed one party’s principles and abolished another major political party entirely. It profoundly split Americans and their ethics, and some historians argue its divisiveness was more potent than even the Vietnam War.

After the Revolutionary War ended in America, France underwent its own revolution, one that engaged all of Europe’s participation. Britain responded by implementing the Rule of 1756, an act that restricted France from trading with its colonies. The rule had absolutely no negative consequences for the United States. In fact, American exporters actually benefitted from the act because after Britain, America was the second greatest exporter of foods and other goods.

As Americans asserted their exemption from Britain’s Rule of 1756, military strategists in London began to question what point there was to ruling the oceans if they could not ultimately limit

2 AMERICAN DIFFICULTIES

"We must remain united or we will fail."
— Albert Gallatin

A collection of fresh, young revolutionaries who called themselves the War Hawks took over the majority of the United States House of Representatives. Outraged over the violations against America's maritime rights as a neutral power, the War Hawks popularized the slogan, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." Despite their loud and boisterous nature, the War Hawks would face a number of difficulties that could result potentially deadly consequences.

First, those who were in complete support of the war were outnumbered by the combined majority of those who were hesitant and those who altogether opposed the war. From the very start, there were several problems for the war effort, and much of this opposition stemmed from economic difficulties. The United States could not afford to supply the necessities of the war without alienating the merchants of our allies. Furthermore, economic conditions in Europe were unstable, and the United States was not prepared to supply the necessities of the war without alienating the merchants of our allies.

Second, the war was not popular among the American people. The war was not popular among the American people, and the war was not popular among the American people. The war was not popular among the American people, and the war was not popular among the American people. The war was not popular among the American people, and the war was not popular among the American people.

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3 UNCOOPERATIVE MILITIAS

"Don't give up the ship." — James Lawrence

After it became clear that the battle of Chesapeake Bay did not, in fact, end the war, the United States Congress realized it needed to enlarge its military. They attempted to attract recruits by offering substantial compensation both monetarily and in land grants; yet, despite their efforts, the army's population never exceeded more than 30,000 soldiers, which was 32,500 less than what officials projected they would need. In order to balance such a deficit in men, Congress passed an act that increased the federal government's authority over state-run militias.

Though the museum was not yet fully designed, Madison amplified the rumors and attempted to influence a nationwide movement that when the words of children passed to their families, children grew. The propaganda raised children's parents' anger to the point, in light of the United States' stance of being strong when it felt itself as oppressed and a few years earlier, American children's rights activists were in the forefront, leading the way. Madison's efforts were directed towards the Union, though the government is not always aware.

4 MILITARY STRATEGIES

"We have met the enemy and they are ours."
— Oliver Hazard Perry

The early strategies implemented by the United States were as incompetent as the man who proposed them. It was rumored that Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton was such a bad alcoholic that no one ever once witnessed him to be sober past two in the afternoon. He argued that most U.S. ships should stay in their ports in order to guard the coasts, reasoning that a small floating fleet on the water would be enough to deter Britain from attacking American trade ships.

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5 NATIVE AMERICANS

“We shall conquer if we are brave. The water will wash them away.
The wind will blow them down.”

— Tenskwatawa

Henry Clay, a prominent member of the War Hawks, had been urging Americans to settle in his home state of Kentucky, an endeavor that made the Native Americans there worry over their declining territory, and thinning game and other wild life. This flood of white settlers gave rise to two incredible Native American leaders, Tecumseh and Tenskwatewa of the Shawnee in the Great Lakes. Coinciding simultaneously with a religious and spiritual Native American revival, the two brothers were captivating leaders who brought all the tribes from Mobile Bay to the Niagara River coming together to form one formidable union.

6 IN THE HEAT OF WAR

“The Almighty has been pleased to Grant us a Signal Victory on Lake Champlain in the Capture of one Frigate, one Brig and two sloops of war of the enemy.”

— United States Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough

In the heat of the War of 1812, Britain and the United States were neck and neck. The Americans would win a battle, then the British would win, and it was this back and forth that made it essentially impossible to determine a victor in the end. The first of this back and forth was at the Battle of Chippewa which was won by the United States. General Jacob Brown led his New York militia toward the Chippewa River, but along the way he and his men were confronted by a two thousand man army of militia, British regulars, and Native American allies led by Major General Robert Ross.

7 THE TREATY OF GHENT

“The war has renewed and reinstated the national feelings and character which the Revolution had given ... and I hope the permanence of the Union is thereby better secured.”
— Albert Gallatin

The War of 1812 ended with no clear winner. Although the United States developed and improved upon its military capabilities, such enhancements did not equal victorious outcomes for the new nation. Beginning the war on a high note, the year of 1814 brought defeat to Americans. Yet, the totality of the year's battles was inconclusive at best. The United States won the Battle of Chippewa, put up strong defenses at Landy's Lane, but their most substantial victory occurred on Lake Champlain at Plattsburgh. However, the British had won Maine where they maintained control over the region, and they had destroyed America's capital in Washington. Nevertheless, treaties for both Britain and the United States were more or less forced by their inability to defend themselves rather than their unwillingness to offend one another.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author of *The Receptacle*, *To Really Know the Narcissist*, *Girl Carnival*, *You Can Only Keep as Much as You Can Carry*, *My Brother's Keeper*, and *Another Memoir*, Kaylie Ann Pickett graduated from the University of Indianapolis with a BA in political science, and is pursuing her MFA in creative writing at the University of San Francisco. In her spare time, Pickett enjoys playing the piano, listening to blues music, and taking long naps with her cat, Bubba Ghee.