



Timeline: War of 1812

A New Nation Goes to War

In June 1812, a deeply divided United States declared war on Great Britain over issues of American sovereignty, primarily relating to sea commerce. Many people at home and abroad saw the conflict as a test to determine if the loosely united new states could assert themselves as a truly independent nation. By the war's end, Americans had forged a new identity, captured by the nation's motto: *E pluribus unum*---out of many, one.



USS = United States Ship (American)

HMS = His Majesty's Ship (British)

British forces included Canadian troops and volunteers and allies from Indian tribes and nations. American forces also included Indian allies.

1812	June	18	US Congress declares war on Great Britain.
	July	12	US invades Canada from Detroit.
		17	US Fort Michilimackinac MI surrenders to British.
	August	15	Potawatomi Indians ambush US civilians and troops as they evacuate Fort Dearborn IL.
		16	Fort Dearborn IL surrenders to British Gen. Sir Isaac Brock's troops.
		19	USS <i>Constitution</i> defeats HMS <i>Guerriere</i> near Boston.
	October	13	British General Brock killed in battle with US forces at Queenston Heights (Canada); US invasion stopped.
		18	USS <i>Wasp</i> defeats HMS <i>Frolic</i> near Chesapeake Bay but is then captured by HMS <i>Poictiers</i> .
		25	USS <i>United States</i> defeats HMS <i>Macedonian</i> near Newport RI.
	December	3	US Secretary of War resigns; Secretary of State (later president) James Monroe becomes acting Secretary of War as well. Later in month, Secretary of the Navy also resigns.
29		USS <i>Constitution</i> defeats HMS <i>Java</i> off coast of Brazil.	
1813	January	22	British forces and Indian allies attack US troops at River Raisin MI; Americans surrender and British withdraw due to heavy casualties and expected arrival of more US troops.
		23	Indian allies return to plunder and burn River Raisin area, killing and kidnapping wounded American troops who had been left behind under British guard. "Remember the Raisin!" becomes American rallying cry.
	February	25	USS <i>Hornet</i> defeats HMS <i>Peacock</i> near British Guiana (South America)
	March	---	USS <i>Essex</i> sails into Pacific Ocean to prey upon British whaling industry. From March through December, British forces raid Chesapeake Bay area in MD and VA.
		27	Oliver Hazard Perry takes command of US fleet being built for Lake Erie on border between US and Canada.
	April	15	US captures Mobile AL from Spain (a British ally).
		27	US captures York (now Toronto) (Canada) and burns government buildings.
	May	1	British attack Fort Meigs OH.
		5	Siege of Fort Meigs ends with withdrawal of British forces.
		27	US captures Fort George near Ontario (Canada)
		29	British attack Sackett's Harbor, main US Navy base on Lake Ontario between US and Canada, but withdraw without success.
	June	1	HMS <i>Hannon</i> defeats USS <i>Chesapeake</i> off MA coast; <i>Chesapeake</i> captain's dying words are "Don't give up the ship!"
		5	US defeated at Battle of Stony Creek (Canada) near Lake Ontario.
	August	1	British attack Fort Stephenson OH but withdraw without success.
		4	Perry's US fleet enters Lake Erie.
		30	Creek War begins as Red Stick Creek Indians resisting white invasion of traditional lands attack Fort Mims AL.
	September	10	British fleet captured or destroyed by Perry's ships during Battle of Lake Erie. Perry flies a battle flag with the words, "Don't give up the ship!"
		27	US Gen. (and later president) William Henry Harrison arrives in Canada.
	October	5	Harrison's troops defeat British and Indian allies at Battle of the Thames (Canada); leader of Indian independence movement Tecumseh killed in battle.
		26	At Battle of Chateauguay, British and Indian allies defeat US troops whose goal was to attack Montreal (Canada).

1813	November	3	At Battle of Tallushatchee AL, Red Stick Creek Indians defeated by Gen. (and later president) Andrew Jackson and US troops, including Indian allies.
		9	Jackson's troops defeat Red Stick Creeks at Battle of Talladega AL.
		11	Outnumbered British forces defeat US troops at Battle of Crysler's Farm (Canada).
December	10	18	US troops force British to evacuate Fort George (Canada); nearby town of Newark burned by US without warning, though US Secretary of War had given permission for destruction only if civilian inhabitants warned.
		18	Fort Niagara NY captured by British.
		19-31	Forts and towns throughout NY attacked, burned, and plundered by British.
		30	British blockade of US ships extends from NY to Louisiana.
1814	March	27	Jackson's troops defeat Red Stick Creeks at Battle of Horseshoe Bend AL; Creek War ends.
		28	HMS <i>Phoebe</i> and HMS <i>Cherub</i> defeat USS <i>Essex</i> off coast of Chile (South America).
April	20	29	HMS <i>Orpheus</i> defeats USS <i>Frolic</i> near Cuba.
		29	USS <i>Peacock</i> defeats HMS <i>Epervier</i> near Florida.
May	22	30	Jackson appointed to command US Seventh Military District (present-day LA, MS, AL)
		30	British blockade of US ships extended north from NY to include New England.
June	28	USS <i>Wasp</i> defeats HMS <i>Reindeer</i> near the English Channel.	
July	5	25	US defeats British at Battle of Chippewa (Canada).
		25	US and British fight to a draw in Battle of Lundy's Lane (Canada).
August	9	13	Creeks sign Treaty of Fort Jackson after their defeat in Creek War, giving half of tribal lands to US. Lands included large sections of present-day AL and GA.
		13	British begin siege of Fort Erie (Canada) against US occupiers.
		22	Jackson and US troops arrive in Mobile AL.
		24-28	British defeat US forces at Battle of Bladensburg MD, advance on Washington DC, burn public buildings including White House and Capitol, and capture Alexandria VA. President, Congress, and many residents forced to evacuate.
September	4	11	US Secretary of War resigns; James Monroe becomes acting secretary again.
		11	US ships defeat British fleet at Battle of Lake Champlain (also known as Battle of Plattsburg NY), ending British attempts to invade northern United States.
		12-16	British ships fail at attempt to capture Mobile AL from US.
		13-14	British ships bombard Fort McHenry in unsuccessful attempt to capture Baltimore MD. Inspired by battle, Francis Scott Key writes what will become known as "The Star-Spangled Banner."
		21	Siege of Fort Erie (Canada) ends as British withdraw and US forces hold fort.
November	5	7	US forces abandon Fort Erie (Canada) and withdraw to NY; before departure they blow up fort.
		7	Jackson's US troops capture Pensacola FL from Spain (a British ally).
		11	Jackson's troops return to Mobile AL.
		22	Jackson and his troops leave Mobile, marching to New Orleans LA because of expected British attack there.
		24-29	British fleet gathers in Jamaica, then sets sail for US Gulf Coast.

The Gulf Coast Campaign

By mid-December of 1814, British forces were camped a few miles below New Orleans and Andrew Jackson's US troops were preparing to defend the city from invasion. Several smaller battles occurred before the American victory at the Battle of New Orleans ended the British attempt to capture one of America's most important ports and the key to the continent's interior. A separate Gulf Coast Campaign/Battle of New Orleans timeline shares the story of those final fateful days of the War of 1812.

