A second war for independence began just 29 years after the end of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812. Named after one year of a war that lasted three, the War of 1812 is often called the forgotten war. As a young country, America enjoyed trade with Britain and France however, the prosperity of this trading would soon end. Britain was at war with France and their leader Napoleon Bonaparte for nearly 20 years. Britain felt the best way to defeat Napoleon was to cut off trade ships to France. England began requiring any vessels that had mercantile business with France to obtain a license at an English port before resuming the voyage to France. France retaliated by declaring that any ships visiting English ports were declared an enemy. America seemed to be in a no win situation.

Battling Napoleon for so many years took a toll on the British fleet, considered the strongest fleet in the world at that time. England needed to keep a full crew on the ships. The British began seizing American merchant ships and impressed thousands of sailors into the British Navy. President James Madison saw this and other violations from England as a threat against the United States. On June 1, 1812 Madison sent a war message to Congress, the first president to make this request. The declaration was signed on June 18, 1812 and America was again at war with England. The British didn’t want this war, they were involved in a long fight against Napoleon and would only supply a small number of troops. With no navy and a small militia, America was ill prepared for war.

Battles began on land and sea. There were devastating defeats such as the surrender of Detroit without a single shot fired on August 16, 1812. When Napoleon was defeated in 1814, England focused on the war with America. British General Robert Ross captured Washington D.C. on August 24, 1814 and burned government buildings including the White House, the Capitol and the Library of Congress to the ground. The outlook was bleak, but Americans refused to accept defeat and struck back by defending Fort McHenry in September 1814.

England spent nearly ten million pounds on the war, America was nearly bankrupt and both were weary of war. The Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814, consisting of just 3000 words and basically restored everything to the way it was before the war. None of the concerns that brought America into this war were even addressed in the treaty. There was no winner in this war, which is probably one reason it is vaguely remembered. This would be the last peace treaty England and the United States signed with one another.

Strangely, one of the greatest battles of the War of 1812 actually occurred after the war was officially over. Unaware of the treaty, British forces attacked New Orleans on January 8, 1815 but were defeated by Andrew Jackson’s renegade army.
In 1812, Illinois was not yet a state but a territory governed by Ninian Edwards. This didn’t keep Illinois from the effects of the War of 1812. Illinois became a border between the British and the American armies. As early as 1811, British forces allied with Native American tribes offering them food, weapons and trade goods. The British and Native American common goal was to remove American settlers from the Northwest Territory. Numerous Indian raids put fear in the Illinois settlers. Many people left for more populated areas causing the population of the territory to decline, the population did not rebound until after the war.

In 1803, the American Army built Fort Dearborn to protect Chicago, as it was an important port for trade. During the War of 1812, the British united with the Native Americans to win back this territory. Fort Dearborn was abandoned on August 15, 1812, as soldiers and settlers fled when over 500 Indians attacked. Half of the soldiers and settlers were killed, the rest captured and Fort Dearborn was burned to the ground. Men, women and children who were captured were distributed among Indian tribes, where many were treated cruelly and died.

In October 1812, Governor Ninian Edwards and almost 400 Illinois troops and U.S. Rangers started north from Edwardsville and burned two Kickapoo villages on the Sangamon River. They marched on to Lake Peoria, home of a large Kickapoo and Potawatomi village. Edwards and his men attacked at dawn killing 24 to 30 Indians without losing a single soldier.

For protection from constant Indian attacks, forts and blockhouses were built. There were at least 94 forts and blockhouses built in the southern Illinois Territory. If settlers were able to get inside, the shelter provided safety as long as the walls and rifle ports were manned. None of the forts or blockhouses were overrun in the Illinois Territory. Because of these shelters, Indians preferred to attack small isolated cabins. Unfortunately, most of the casualties from these Indian attacks were women and children.

The Treaty of Ghent officially ended the War of 1812 but hostilities remained in the Illinois Territory. U.S. Volunteer Rangers continued to patrol the territory until October 1815. Slowly tensions began to dissolve and it was considered safe to live, work and raise a family in the Illinois Territory. Many communities began to grow in southern Illinois. Still leery of Indian attacks many settlers were apprehensive about settling in northern region. By 1818, when Illinois became a state, the population of southern Illinois grew to nearly 40,000 people while 100 people lived in Chicago. As we remember the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, we need to observe the contribution Illinois gave to this conflict.

**Places to Go & Primary Sources to See**

**Fort LaMotte:** [http://www.fortlamotte.com/](http://www.fortlamotte.com/) Located in Palestine, Illinois, the War of 1812 is revisited in the replica of "old Fort LaMotte". This fort was one of three built in the Palestine area during the war. Before construction began, research on period forts and combing through historical records describing War of 1812 forts and blockhouses in the territory was conducted. Aided by a few scraps of historical information on the original Fort LaMotte, a layout for the fort was developed that would consist of a durable and sturdy stockade enclosing approximately 100 feet on the side with a single blockhouse in one corner, an Ensign’s cabin, two lean-to shelters, and a water well. This would complete the first phase of construction. The last full weekend in April, Palestine celebrates Fort LaMotte Days. This celebration includes an 1812 encampment, archeological displays, tours of Fort LeMotte and a battle reenactment.
Toeing the Mark

You hear it at sporting events, military events, national celebrations or maybe you performed it in school, but “The Star Spangled Banner”, our national anthem, began as a poem written during the War of 1812. Major George Armistead was commander at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore was America’s third largest city during the War of 1812 and it was only a matter of time before the British set their sights on claiming the city for England. Armistead wanted a flag over Fort McHenry that the British could see from miles away. He commissioned Mary Pickersgill, a Baltimore flag maker, to sew two flags, a small storm flag and a large garrison flag, 30 by 42 feet. To put this into perspective, the size of the flag would measure about one-fourth the size of a modern basketball court. This larger flag was known as “The Star Spangled Banner”.

The attack on Fort McHenry came on September 12, 1814 and American forces were able to hold off the British troops. On September 13, the British naval forces began a 25 hour bombardment on Fort McHenry. Rockets whistled through the air and burst into flames, mortars fired bombshells that exploded in showers of fiery shrapnel. While the battle commenced, Francis Scott Key, a successful lawyer was aboard a British ship trying to secure the release of a civilian prisoner. Afraid Key would reveal plans of the attack, the British detained him aboard the ship until the battle was over. Key witnessed the attack on Fort McHenry. At dawn on September 14, 1814 the skies became quiet. The British were retreating and the battle was over. In the distance, Key saw the huge flag still flying over Fort McHenry and knew that the American soldiers had not surrendered. Francis Scott Key was so moved by the sight of that flag still waving he began to compose a poem. He worked all night revising and creating four verses about the American victory. First titled “The Defense of Fort McHenry”, the poem was published and set to the music of an 18th century British tune “Anacreon in Heaven”. The poem and music made its first public performance on October 19, 1814. A music store published the words and music under the title “The Star Spangled Banner”.

“The Star Spangled Banner” became one of America’s most popular patriotic songs. During the Civil War, a time when Americans turned to music to express their feelings, “The Star Spangled Banner” was referenced in many songs. “Farewell to the Star Spangled Banner” and “Adieu to the Star Spangled Banner Forever”, were songs published in the Confederacy while “Flag of our Union Forever” and “March on for the Union” were sung to express loyalty to the Union.

On July 26, 1889, “The Star Spangled Banner” became the official tune to be played during the raising of the flag. In 1917, both the United States Army and Navy designated the song be played for ceremonial purposes but it was not the official national anthem despite attempts by patriotic organizations. After decades of attempts, Congress passed a bill making “The Star Spangled Banner” the official national anthem for the United States. The Bill was signed by President Herbert Hoover on March 3, 1931.

Most Americans know the first verse to Francis Scott Key’s Star Spangled Banner as our national anthem, yet there are three other verses that are rarely performed. “On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep, Where the foe’s haughty host in dread silence reposes, What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep, As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses? Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam, In full glory reflected now shines in the stream: ‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave! And where is that band who so vauntingly swore That the havoc of war and the battle’s confusion, A home and a country should leave us no more! Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution. No refuge could save the hireling and slave From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave: And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave! Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand Between their loved home and the war’s desolation! Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.” And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!”
### PRIMARY SOURCES IN THE CLASSROOM

**The Teacher’s Page**
The Library of Congress offers classroom materials and professional development to help teachers effectively use primary sources from the Library’s vast digital collections in their teaching. [http://www.loc.gov/teachers](http://www.loc.gov/teachers)

**Presentations and Activities**
Presentations and Activities offer media-rich historical context or interactive opportunities for exploration to both teachers and students. [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities)

**Thanksgiving Timeline**

**American Memory Timeline: The New Nation, 1783-1815**
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/newnatn/](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/newnatn/) James Madison one of the authors of the Constitution—led the new nation through another war with Great Britain. This, of course, was the unpopular War of 1812. This war ended in 1815 and if nothing else it convinced Britain that the United States was on the map to stay.

**Lesson Plans**

**Thomas Jefferson’s Library: Making the Case for a National Library**
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/jefferson/index.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/jefferson/index.html) Students examine a letter written by Thomas Jefferson and identify techniques he used to persuade Congress to purchase his personal library. Students consider a selection of Jefferson’s books and then write their own persuasive letters urging the books’ purchase, while considering the question: “Why would Congress need this book to shape or govern the nation?”

**Collection Connections**
Historical content and ideas for teaching with specific Library of Congress primary source collections. [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections)

**James Madison Papers**
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/james-madison/file.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/james-madison/file.html) This collection documents the activities of the fourth president of the United States. Included are materials documenting his two terms as President including materials on the War of 1812.

**The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress**

**Nineteenth Century in Print: Periodicals**
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/print-periodicals/history2.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/print-periodicals/history2.html) The War of 1812 was the new nation's first military effort to defend its sovereignty and its right to be treated as an equal in foreign relations. A number of articles written during the Civil War reflected on events during the War of 1812. Students can read the article “Memoir of Lewis Clover, “A Prisoner of War” relating the story of a young sailor’s involvement in events leading up to the war and his imprisonment.

**The First American West: The Ohio River Valley, 1750-1820**
[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/ohio-valley/history7.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/ohio-valley/history7.html) This collection documents the travels of the first Europeans to enter the trans-Appalachian west, the maps tracing their explorations, and relations with Native American people. Books and letters in the collection record land acquisitions, agricultural development, navigation, trade, and political affairs in the early Federal period including western conspiracies and the War of 1812.
Created for children, the Library of Congress, America’s Story wants you to have fun with history while learning at the same time through interactive games and stories. [http://www.americaslibrary.gov](http://www.americaslibrary.gov)

Meet Amazing Americans
Discover the inventors, politicians, performers, activists and other everyday people who made this country what it is today. [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/index.php](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/index.php)

Andrew Jackson: The War of 1812 and the Battle of New Orleans
[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/jackson/aa_jackson_icon_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/jackson/aa_jackson_icon_1.html)
Andrew Jackson is the only president who served in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The War of 1812 gave him the national recognition he would later need to win the presidency.

Andrew Jackson: From Horseshoe Bend to the Trail of Tears
[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/jackson/aa_jackson_indians_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/jackson/aa_jackson_indians_1.html)
On August 30, 1813, Creek Indians had killed hundreds of frontier settlers at Fort Mims. Jackson and his militia were sent to fight the Creeks.

James Madison: Second War of American Independence
[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/madison/aa_madison_war_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/madison/aa_madison_war_1.html)
On June 18, 1812, James Madison signed Congress’s official declaration of war against England, find out why.

James Madison: Madison’s Memorable Wife
In August 1814, the British burned the White House to the ground, find out what item Dolly Madison refused to leave without.

Explore the States

Maine: The Port of Portland, Maine
[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/me/es_me_port_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/me/es_me_port_1.html)
Would you ever guess that the closest U.S. port city to Europe is in Maine? Well, it is.

Jump Back in Time
Take a trip to an era in American History [http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/)

January 8, 1815: Winning the Battle of New Orleans
[http://americaslibrary.gov/jb/nation/jb_nation_jackson_1.html](http://americaslibrary.gov/jb/nation/jb_nation_jackson_1.html)
On this day in 1815, Major General Andrew Jackson led a small, poorly equipped army to victory against 8,000 British troops at the Battle of New Orleans.

Today in History
Each day an event from American history is illustrated by digitized items from the Library of Congress American Memory historic collections. [http://www.loc.gov/ammem/today](http://www.loc.gov/ammem/today)

June 18, 1812: The War of 1812
President James Madison signed a declaration of war against Great Britain, marking the beginning of the War of 1812.

May 9, 1813: Siege of Fort Meigs
[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/may09.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/may09.html)
General William Henry Harrison turned back a siege by Shawnee military leader Tecumseh and British general Henry A. Proctor.

Performing Arts Encyclopedia
Explore music, theater and dance at the Library of Congress [http://www.loc.gov/performingarts/pae-home.html](http://www.loc.gov/performingarts/pae-home.html)

Patriotic Melodies: Star spangled banner
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200000017/default.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200000017/default.html)
Learn more about our national anthem from this song collection.
December 19, 1813: Old Fort Niagara Captured  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/dec19.html  500 British soldiers and 500 militia and Indians crossed the Niagara River determined to seize Old Fort Niagara on the opposite shore in New York.

August 19, 1814: The Burning of Washington  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/aug19.html  Upon entering the city, the British set fire to the White House, the Capitol, and many other public buildings.

September 13, 1814: The Star Spangled Banner  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/sep13.html  Francis Scott Key composed the Star Spangled Banner during the battle of Fort McHenry.

January 8, 1815: Battle of New Orleans  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jan08.html  Major General Andrew Jackson led a small, poorly-equipped army to victory against eight thousand British troops at the Battle of New Orleans.

American Memory provides free and open access through the Internet to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the American experience. It is a digital record of American history and creativity. These materials, from the collections of the Library of Congress and other institutions, chronicle historical events, people, places and ideas that continue to shape America, serving the public as a resource for education and lifelong learning.

An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/tbpehtml/  The Printed Ephemera Collection at the Library of Congress is a rich repository of Americana. In total, the collection comprises 28,000 primary source items dating from the seventeenth century to the present and encompassing key events and eras in U.S. history, including the War of 1812. One example is a proclamation issued by President James Madison announcing that the U.S. had declared war on Great Britain. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/tbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+22800800))

A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation  http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html  This collection contains a large selection of Congressional material related to the War of 1812, including debates, laws, journals, documents, and reports. The Annals of Congress contains the debates of Congress during this time period. The appendix of the Annals of Congress presents documents related to the War of 1812 and peace negotiations with Great Britain. The American State Papers provides legislative and executive documents concerning Great Britain. The United States Statutes at Large includes the declaration of war against Great Britain signed by President Madison and the Treaty of Ghent which ended the war.
The First American West: The Ohio River Valley, 1750-1820 [Link to collection]

This collection assembles 15,000 pages of original historical material documenting the land, peoples, exploration, and transformation of the trans-Appalachian West from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. The collection contains over thirty items directly related to the War of 1812, including letters and journals.

The James Madison Papers [Link to collection]

The James Madison Papers consist of correspondence and notes that trace his two terms as the fourth president of the United States, illuminating the origins and course of the War of 1812, including copies of letters written by Madison to Secretary of War John Armstrong. Madison’s observations from the August 24, 1814 capture of Washington by British troops is available in this collection.

The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress [Link to collection]

Jefferson’s papers consist of approximately 27,000 documents ranging in date from 1606 to 1827. Correspondence, memoranda, notes, and drafts of documents make up two-thirds of the papers. This collection contains many of Jefferson’s letters written to and from James Madison and others concerning the War of 1812.

Wise Guide [Link to Wise Guide]

A monthly web magazine of historical highlights and fascinating facts from the Library of Congress.

January 8: What’s Important about January 8th? [Link to article]

If you lived in the South during the 19th century, you’d have no trouble answering this question.

Web Guides

The Library of Congress is home to many of the most important documents in American history. This website provides links to materials digitized from the collections of the Library of Congress that supplement and enhance the study of these crucial documents.

A Guide to the War of 1812 [Link to guide]

The digital collections of the Library of Congress contain a wide variety of material associated with the War of 1812, including manuscripts, broadsides, pictures, and government documents. This guide compiles links to digital materials related to the War of 1812 that are available throughout the Library of Congress Web site.

Treaty of Ghent [Link to treaty]

The Treaty of Ghent ended the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. Peace negotiations began in Ghent, Belgium, starting in August of 1814. After four months of talks, the treaty was signed on December 24, 1814. The Senate unanimously ratified the Treaty of Ghent on February 16, 1815.

Prints and Photographs

The collection of the Prints and Photographs Division include photographs, fine and popular prints and drawings, posters, architectural and engineering drawings.

Popular Graphic Arts [Link to collection]

About 15,000 historical prints created to document geographic locations or popular subjects and sometimes used for advertising and educational purposes. When searching War of 1812, paintings and etchings of great battles, war ships and cartoons are found.

Miscellaneous Items in High Demand [Link to collection]

This collection consists of more than 80,000 descriptions of individual images. Images relating to the War of 1812 include lithograph of United States Army and Navy uniforms from the War of 1812, a painting of the first shot of the war and a photograph of the room where the Treaty of Ghent was signed.
The U.S. frigate United States capturing H.B.M. frigate Macedonian: fought, Octr. 25th, 1812

United States Army and Navy uniforms-War of 1812

Battle of Tippecanoe

Flag which floated over Fort McHenry (...) star, June 4/14

The Star spangled banner: national song

The Star Spangled Banner

Citations:


