

“The War of 1812”

Well I'm on this British ship for Mr. Madison; he fled into Virginia, when they burned the White House down.

And I'm watching them bomb Baltimore, all night long: rockets in red glare, bombs bursting in the air.

When the New Madrid earthquake hit, Tecumseh had predicted it would wipe the white man out. Where the Tippecanoe and Wabash end, William Henry Harrison, attacked the Shawnee Indians, so they wound up with the British then

Well it's 1812 and the British are coming again, they're coming again. They're coming again.

Jackson marched southeast, destroyed the Seminoles and Creeks and crossed Lake Ponchartrain and waited 'til the British came.

They were ten thousand strong, for they just beat Napoleon, they went up the Mississippi, and onto New Orleans.

*Jackson and his men, pirates, slaves, and Indians, were well dug in
When the British marched into the town. We shot two thousand to the ground
And pushed the rest back on down the Mississippi 'til they drown.*

Well it's 1812 and the British are coming again, they're coming again, they're coming again

From Lake Champlain to Mobile Bay we turned the bloody British away again, we did it again, we did it again.

Historical Background:

For the first two decades after its creation, the United States was continually plagued by foreign problems, which stemmed from a series of wars between England and France. In the 1790's, President Washington proclaimed that the United States would assume a position of neutrality in these conflicts, and advised his countrymen to avoid European affairs altogether. This became increasingly difficult, as the Napoleonic Wars raged throughout Europe and in the Atlantic, and U.S. merchant ships continued to be seized by the warring parties. In an attempt to avoid any further conflict, Jefferson issued the disastrous embargo of all U.S. trade in 1807. But during the Madison administration, the embargo was lifted and, subsequently, the seizure of U.S. merchant ships resumed.

The three primary factors which led the United States to declare war with England were: 1) The suspicion that the British were supplying weapons to Native Americans, who were attacking American settlements on the Western frontier; 2) The “War Hawks,” a group of Western congressmen led by Henry Clay, who wanted to seize British Canada for U.S. settlement; and 3) The continued British harassment of U.S. shipping, as well as the impressment of American sailors.

The war itself was, more or less, a draw, but some interesting landmark events happened in the process: The White House was burned, the “Star-Spangled Banner” was composed, and The Battle of New Orleans was fought—two weeks after the peace treaty had already been signed. The war did result, however, in a surge in cultural and economic nationalism in an emerging United States.

