

## New Jersey and the War of 1812



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Engraving of British frigate *Macedonian* being fired upon by U.S. frigate *United States*, Oct. 25, 1812

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**Grade Level:** Secondary

**Class periods:** Two-four

**Objectives:** Students will be able to:

- Analyze the causes of the War of 1812
- Identify specific ways in which the Embargo Act impacted the economy of New Jersey
- Evaluate articles from newspapers during the War of 1812 to determine whether New Jersey representatives should have supported or opposed the War of 1812
- Explain the perspective and role of New Jersey citizens during the War of 1812
- Describe how the Federalists and Democrat-Republicans used national interests in their local campaigning in the 1812 election
- Determine if the War in 1812 was to the benefit or detriment of people in New Jersey
- Explain how New Jersey voters were impacted by national events when voting for President in 1812 and 1816

## **New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies (2020):**

- 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.a: Cite evidence to evaluate the extent to which the leadership and decisions of early administrations of the national government met the goals established in the Constitution.
- 6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.a: Explain how and why constitutional civil liberties were impacted by acts of government during the Early Republic (i.e., Alien and Sedition Acts).
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.3.b: Explain how political parties were formed and continue to be shaped by differing perspectives regarding the role and power of federal government.
- 6.1.8.EconNE.4.a: Explain how major technological developments revolutionized land and water transportation, as well as the economy, in New Jersey and the nation.
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.4.a: Explain the changes in America's relationships with other nations by analyzing policies, treaties, tariffs, and agreements.
- 6.1.12.EcoEM.2.b: Assess the effectiveness of the new state and national governments attempts to respond to economic challenges including domestic and foreign trade policy issues.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.2.a.: Create a timeline that related events in Europe to the development of American trade and American foreign and domestic policies.

### **Essential/Focus Questions:**

- To what extent were the politics in New Jersey representative of regional interests during the years leading up to and during the War of 1812?
- What were the economic ramifications of the international conflict with Britain and France on New Jersey?
- How did national events impact local elections in 1812?
- Was the War of 1812 in the best interest of New Jersey? The Nation?

### **Background:**

After overthrowing the French revolutionary government, Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in 1799. Britain declared war on France in 1803 after Napoleon seized parts of Italy, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. In 1806 Britain enacted a naval blockade of the French coasts and France closed French-controlled territory to British trade. Britain responded with "Orders of Council" in 1807 forbidding French trade with its allies or neutrals. In addition, the British, and to a lesser extent the French, were attacking American ships and forcing American seamen to serve in their navy. The British navy suffered manpower shortages due to the low pay, harsh working conditions and a lack of qualified seamen. Impressment of seamen for the Royal navy was a longstanding maritime tradition in Great Britain. Britain came to regard impressment as a maritime right and extended the practice to boarding neutral merchant ships in local waters and at sea. Britain did not recognize naturalized American citizenship, and treated anyone born a British subject as still "British". As a result, the British claimed that many American seamen who were "naturalized" citizens (often a dubious claim since many were born in the United States) were actually British citizens who had illegally defected to the United States. Between 1793 and 1812, the British impressed more than 15,000 U.S. sailors to supplement their fleet during their Napoleonic Wars with France. See <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/british-navy-impressment/>

From the perspective of the United States, the whole nature and purpose of impressment represented an affront to human rights and national sovereignty: the act of forcing individuals to serve a foreign power against their will was an "arbitrary deprivation" of personal liberty devoid of the due process of

law. This perceived flouting of freedom on the part of the British also clashed directly with America's emerging attitude regarding the rights of neutrals on the high seas. International maritime law at that time limited the extent of national sovereignty to a country's warships and territorial waters, which often left civilian fleets vulnerable on the open seas. Although the United States insisted on the democratic rights of seamen and sovereign vessels of all nationalities on the high seas, evidence exists of similar efforts at impressment on the part of the American naval establishment. See <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2012/summer/1812-impressment.html>

On June 22, 1807, the British warship HMS *Leopard* pursued, attached and boarded the American frigate, the *Chesapeake*, off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia, looking for deserters from the Royal Navy. After a short battle which killed three people and injured eighteen, the *Chesapeake* commander surrendered the vessel and four crew members were removed and tried for desertion. Both the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans were united in their outrage against the British. While President Thomas Jefferson attempted to negotiate a settlement with Britain, fourteen American seamen were seized by the British from the warships *Jason and Columbine* off Sandy Hook, New Jersey, in early Sept. 1807. With negotiations failing, President Jefferson considered declaring war against Britain but opted instead for an embargo on trade in December 1807. The goal was to use economic coercion to force Britain and France to stop impressing American seamen and to respect American neutrality. The Embargo Act banned the export of American goods on American or foreign ships. The Act prohibited American vessels from landing in any foreign port. Non-Importation laws outlawed the importation of British textile and metal products. Most New Jersey residents rallied behind Thomas Jefferson's government in the initial dispute over the British navy's impressment of American merchant sailors and the seizure of American ships trading with France. However, this unity ended with the enactment of the Embargo Act, which hurt trade along the Eastern seaboard, including New Jersey.

Early in 1809, just 3 days before President Jefferson left office, Congress repealed the embargo. In effect for 15 months, the embargo exacted no political concessions from either France or Britain.

James Madison, elected president in 1812, had an opportunity to end the War of 1812 almost as soon as it began. The British had repealed the Orders in Council rules that curbed American trade with Europe – and thus one of Madison's major reasons for war was now moot. If the British had foregone the right to impress American sailors, Madison could well have gone back to Congress with the suggestion that hostilities cease immediately. However, the British considered impressment their right by custom, and believed it essential to their naval might. By June 1812 the United States had had enough and the United States declared war on Great Britain, citing, in part, impressment. Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815 and Britain ended the practice of impressing seamen on non-British ships.

### **Activity 1: Responses to impressment, 1807**

Read Handout 1 and compare the responses to the *Chesapeake* incident in 1807 from two national newspapers, the *Washington National Intelligencer* and the *New York Evening Post*.

- Which newspaper do you think reflects the view of the Federalists? Why?
- Which do you think reflects the view of the Democratic-Republicans? Why?
- What point did the two newspaper agree on?

The *Intelligencer* was reflecting the view of President Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans. The article gives the British the benefit of doubt that perhaps the incident was the work of subordinate naval commanders rather than the British government. Jefferson did not want to go to war with Britain.

The *New York Evening Post* reflects the views of the Federalists and puts some of the blame on the American commodore. The Federalists are interested in making President Jefferson rather than the British look bad.

Both newspapers expressed outrage about the incident.

### **Activity 2: Analyze political cartoon, 1807**

Have students carefully look at and analyze Handout 2: "OGRABME, or The American Snapping Turtle" political cartoon and respond to the questions:

- Where does your eye go first?
- What do the snapping turtle, the man with the barrel and the man trying to stop the turtle represent?
- What do the ship and the men on the shore in the background represent?
- What powerful words and ideas are expressed?
- What does "OGRABME" spell backwards?
- What was happening during this time period?
- What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source? Was he supporting or opposing the Embargo Act?
- What does the creator do to get his or her point across?
- What was this primary source's audience?
- What have you learned? Support your conclusions with specific evidence.

This political cartoon from 1807, created by Alexander Anderson, addresses the displeasure with Thomas Jefferson's Embargo Act prevalent throughout the northern United States. The cartoon depicts a smuggler or trader being bitten by an American snapping turtle, the U.S. government, called "Ograbme." The name is a play on the word embargo (backwards). In the distance is a British ship (flying the Union Jack), presumably waiting to smuggle American goods back to Britain. The smuggler/trader's exclamation of, "Oh! This cursed Ograbme," is a thinly-veiled criticism of the Embargo Act. Intended to punish Britain and France for interfering with American shipping, the Embargo Act actually harmed American merchants, who were now bereft of profitable overseas markets. Since most American industry during the early 1800s was located in the North, and shipping was from the Atlantic seacoast, criticism of the Embargo Act was rather widespread in the northeast section of the country.

### **Activity 3: The Economic Impact of the Embargo**

By the spring of 1808 New England ports were nearly shut down, and the regional economy was headed into a depression with growing unemployment. On the Canadian border with New York and Vermont, the embargo laws were openly flouted by smugglers. In March 1808 Congress prohibited for the first time, the export of all goods, either by land or by sea, regardless of destination. The Enforcement Act, signed into law in April 1808, was the last of the embargo acts. It decreed that port authorities were allowed to seize cargoes without a warrant, and to bring to trial any shipper or merchant who was thought to have merely contemplated violating the embargo.

Read Handout 3: Chart of Exports and Imports, 1805-1818, to determine the economic impact of the Embargo Act of 1807. How much were exports reduced from 1807 to 1808? How much were imports reduced from 1807 to 1808? Draw a conclusion as to whether or not the Embargo Act had a negative impact on the U.S. economy.

The Embargo Acts of hurt the American economy far more than the British or French, and resulted in widespread smuggling. Exports fell from \$108 million in 1807 to just \$22 million in 1808. Farm prices fell sharply. Shippers also suffered. Harbors filled with idle ships and nearly 30,000 sailors found themselves jobless.

#### **Activity 4: The Economic Impact of the Embargo on New Jersey**

What was the impact on New Jersey? Look at Handout 4: Map of New Jersey. What can be inferred about the economy of New Jersey in 1807 from this map? The map shows that New Jersey has a long coast along the Atlantic Ocean. Although much of the shipping normally went through New York City and Philadelphia, the coastal ports of New Jersey offered excellent opportunities for smuggling.

Read and use Handout 5: Excerpt from “New Jersey and the Embargo, 1807-1809,” New Jersey History, vol. 116, nos. 3-4, Fall/Winter 1998 by Harvey Strum. As you read the short article, list the impact of the Embargo on each of the places identified.

What can you conclude? The Embargo created hardships for New Jersey farmers and merchants trading with New York City and Philadelphia. The produce from New Jersey farmers used the ports of New York and Philadelphia. Roads were slow and minimal. Canals did not yet exist. Trade depended greatly on the seaports. Smuggling out of Perth Amboy became rampant.

#### **Activity 5: The Political Impact of the Embargo**

Background: James Sloan was a Democratic-Republican serving in the House of Representatives from one of New Jersey’s six at-large districts starting in 1803. He was a Quaker from Gloucester County (although he was later disowned by the Quakers) and had held a number of township offices, including that of tax assessor, as well as serving on the county board of Chosen Freeholders, and as a justice for Gloucester County. He organized and took charge of the new Democratic-Republican political organization in Gloucester County in 1800 at a time when most Quakers in south Jersey supported Federalists. He was serving his third term in the House of Representative when he voted for the first Embargo Act and its supplements. But in 1808, he broke with the Democratic-Republicans and questioned the benefit and constitutionality of the Embargo.

Read Handout 6: Excerpt from Bruce Bendler’s “James Sloan: Renegade or True Republican.” Use the graphic organizer to explain why, according to Sloan, the Embargo was bad for the nation; for the region; and specifically, for New Jersey. Then decide whether you think he was a renegade or a patriot. Support your decision with evidence. Do you think that members of Congress should follow the dictates of their political party if they are contrary to the interests of their constituents?

In 1808 New Jersey’s Democratic-Republicans met in convention to nominate candidates for the U.S. Congress. They denied the nomination to three-term incumbent James Sloan. In addition to arguing against the Embargo imposed by the Jefferson administration, Sloan had opposed the party’s nomination of James Madison as the candidate to succeed Jefferson as president. Four years later, Sloan broke with the Democratic-Republican party to support a revival of Federalism in New Jersey. He opposed war against Great Britain and endorsed Dewitt Clinton for president, as part of a new coalition, the “Friends of Peace.”

## **Activity 6: The Vote for War**

Background: New Jersey, like much of the rest of the United States, had been hurt as a result of the Embargo Act. Farmers and merchants lost their markets as they were cut off from Europe. Surplus grains and other crops from New Jersey and other states drove prices down. And the economic sanction had not been effective in ending the impressment of Americans. Before he left office, President Jefferson ended the Embargo. A faction of congressman known as the "War Hawks" began calling for more aggressive measures.

When James Madison became president in early 1809 he also sought to avoid war with Britain. But British actions, and a continuing drumbeat for war in the U.S. Congress, seemed destined to make war with Britain unavoidable. The slogan "Free Trade and Sailor's Rights" became a rallying cry. In early June 1812 President Madison sent a war message to Congress in which he listed complaints about British behavior toward America: Impressment, continual harassment of American commerce by British warships, British Orders in Council which declared blockades against neutral American ships bound for European ports, and attacks by "savages" on "one of our extensive frontiers" believed to be instigated by British troops in Canada.

Henry Clay, a leader of the War Hawks, was a young member of Congress from Kentucky. Representing the views of Americans living in the West, Clay believed that war with Britain would not only restore American prestige but would also provide a great benefit in territory. An openly stated goal of the western War Hawks was for the United States to invade and seize Canada.

Analyze Handout 7: The vote in Congress for War in 1812:

Which states had split votes by their members of Congress? (New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, North Carolina).

Why do you think they were split? (The eastern seaboard states were tremendously injured by the Embargo and would be the first to face the British Navy.)

Even within the Democratic-Republican party, support for the war was hardly unanimous: one-quarter of either voted against the measure or abstained from the vote. Not a single Federalist voted for the war. The partisan divisions led critics to later pronounce the War of 1812 "Mr. Madison's War."

Have your class conduct a Congressional hearing about whether or not to support President Madison's request for war against Britain in 1812. Assign students to play the role of and argue on behalf of the members of Congress from each of the 17 states in the union in 1812 (See Handout 7). Then have the class vote for or against war in 1812.

## **Activity 7: The Election of 1812**

After President Madison's declaration of war against Great Britain in June 1812, New Jersey Democratic-Republicans found themselves divided about their leadership. In political campaigns in 1812, national rather than local issues dominated. Instead of concentrating on problems in their county, local politicians were arguing about the Embargo Act and whether or not war was necessary.

Have students analyze Handout 8: Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1812.

- Who was running for President in the election of 1812? James Madison of Virginia and DeWitt Clinton of New York
- How many electoral votes did the Democratic-Republican candidate James Madison receive? (128)
- How many electoral votes did the Federalist/Peace fusion candidate De Witt Clinton receive? (89)
- Who won the election and by how many votes? James Madison won by 39 electoral votes. The electoral vote in Maryland was split: 5 for DeWitt Clinton and 6 for James Madison.
- Which candidate did New Jersey vote for? DeWitt Clinton
- Why do you think New Jersey voted this way? Displeasure with the Embargo Act and the vote for war
- Evaluate the decision of New Jersey representatives to vote for or against the War of 1812.
- Is there a regional pattern to the voting? What is it? Why do you think the northern states primarily voted for the Federalist/Peace candidate and the southern and western states for the Democratic-Republican?
- Were the issues in New Jersey different from or consistent with those of their Federalist-voting neighboring states, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware? Explain.
- Compare the Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1812 with Handout 7: The vote in the House of Representative for the Request for War in 1812. Are the two consistent? Did the election follow the vote for war? (Yes)

In New Jersey, the Federalists gained support and New Jersey's electoral votes for president went to the Federalist/Peace fusion candidate, De Witt Clinton. However, the Democratic-Republican candidate, James Madison, won the national election. Benefiting from anger over national Democratic-Republican policies, New Jersey Federalists succeeded in electing Federalist Aaron Ogden as governor in 1812, for a one-year term.

### **Activity 8: New Jersey Perspectives on the War of 1812**

Predict what you think would be the impact on New Jersey, with its long Atlantic seaboard, of a war with Great Britain in 1812. Most likely, the British would raid East coast ports and possibly attack coastal settlements.

Analyze Handout 9: New Jersey Newspaper editorials about the War of 1812. Have students read the editorials from the *Centinel of Freedom* and the *Trenton Federalist* written during the War of 1812 and respond to the following questions using the graphic organizer:

- Did you read anything surprising? If so, what and why?
- What political point of view do you think the *Centinel of Freedom* is expressing? (Democratic-Republican)
- What arguments does the *Centinel of Freedom* make in support of the war? National pride. The U.S. is fighting for the principle of open seas.
- Which political point of view do you think the *Trenton Federalist* is expressing? (The Federalists)
- What arguments does the *Trenton Federalist* make against the war? The cost of the war in terms of taxes. Trying to conquer Canada is not worth it.
- Do you think the War of 1812 was in the best interests of New Jersey? Why or why not? Support your response with evidence.

Although the war was unpopular in New Jersey, many New Jerseyans enlisted in the U.S. military during the War of 1812. A number of state residents served with the 15<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, commonly referred to as the "New Jersey Regiment," led by New Jersey-born military officer and explorer Zebulon Montgomery Pike. Pike led the American assault on York (now Toronto), the provincial capital of Upper Canada. The British retreated and the U.S. troops burned Upper Canada's government buildings.

Another New Jerseyan who served with distinction in the War of 1812 was James Lawrence who was given command of the USS *Chesapeake*. The frigate left Boston on June 1, 1813 and immediately engaged the blockading Royal Navy frigate *Shannon* in a fierce battle. Although slightly smaller, the British ship disabled *Chesapeake* with gunfire within the first few minutes. Captain Lawrence, mortally wounded by small arms fire, ordered his officers, "Don't give up the ship. Fight her till she sinks." Or "Tell them to fire faster; don't give up the ship." Men carried him below, and his crew was overwhelmed by a British boarding party shortly afterward. James Lawrence died of his wounds. His fellow officer Oliver Hazard Perry ordered a large blue battle ensign, stitched with the phrase "Don't Give Up The Ship" in bold white letters, which was displayed on his flagship during a victorious engagement against the British on Lake Erie in September 1813. The original flag is displayed in the Naval Academy Museum and a replica is displayed in Memorial Hall at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Soldiers on Sandy Hook watched for British warships seeking to enter New York Bay and flashed signals to the Atlantic Highlands. Lookouts on Staten Island read the signal via telescope and relayed an alert to Manhattan. The waters off Sandy Hook became the site of a U.S. defeat in the final days of the war.

Starting in March 1813, a Royal Navy squadron sealed off Delaware Bay, along with Raritan Bay and other New Jersey waterways, as part of a larger naval blockade that covered the Atlantic coast. Though the waterways remained closed for most of the War of 1812, British naval forces did allow neutral vessels access to ports in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. British raiding parties frequently conducted raids to steal livestock and other provisions from South Jersey coastal communities.

### **Activity 9: The impact of the War of 1812 on American politics**

Background: After the abdication of Napoleon in April 1814 British public opinion demanded major gains in the war against the United States. However, realizing that there was little to gain from prolonged warfare and the growing opposition to wartime taxes and demands by British merchants to reopen trade with American, peace discussions between British and American negotiators began in the neutral city of Ghent (Belgium) in August 1814. The resulting Treaty of Ghent restored relations between the two nations to the borders of the two countries (U.S. and British Canada) existing before the start of hostilities. The treaty was ratified by Parliament on December 30, 1814. Because of the era's lack of telecommunications, it took weeks for news of the peace treaty to reach the United States. In the interim, American forces under Andrew Jackson won the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815. The treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate unanimously on February 18, 1815.

Impact in Europe: The wars resulted in the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and sowed the seeds of nationalism that would lead to the consolidations of Germany and Italy later in the century. Meanwhile, the global Spanish Empire began to unravel as French occupation of Spain weakened Spain's hold over its colonies, providing an opening for nationalist revolutions in Spanish America. As a direct result of the Napoleonic wars, the British Empire became the foremost world power for the next century.

Impact on the United States: The War of 1812 exposed the military weakness of the United States, which was ill-equipped and unprepared to challenge the British. The British were able to repel the

American invasion of Canada and to lay waste to the nation's capital. Only poor weather conditions prevented the British from actually occupying Washington, D.C. And the full force of the British fleet was not concentrated against the United States since Britain's prime focus was on defeating Napoleon. Although the Treaty of Ghent failed to secure official British acknowledgment of American maritime rights, Britain had already stopped its policy of impressing seamen off American ships. In the century of peace among the naval powers from 1815 until World War I American rights were not seriously violated. The course of the war resolved and ended all of the original issues, especially since the American Indians had been defeated and the Americans scored enough victories (especially at New Orleans) to satisfy honor and the sense of becoming fully independent from Britain.

Analyze Handout 10: Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1816, and compare it with Handout 8: Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1812.

- Who was running for President in the election of 1816? James Madison of Virginia and Rufus King of New York
- How many electoral votes did the Democratic-Republican candidate James Monroe receive? (183)
- How many electoral votes did the Federalist/Peace fusion candidate Rufus King receive? (34 votes from three states: Massachusetts, Connecticut and Delaware)
- Which candidate did New Jersey vote for? Monroe
- Why do you think New Jersey voted this way?
- Compare the Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1816 with Handout 8: The Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1812. The War of 1812 was hardly a victory, so why do you think the Democratic-republican candidate, James Monroe, won by a landslide?

While the war had not ended in victory, the peace was nonetheless satisfactory to the American people, and the Democratic-Republicans received credit for its prosecution. The Federalists had been discredited by their opposition to the war and secessionist rhetoric from New England. Many in the public perceived the Federalist Party as unpatriotic and possibly treasonous and abandoned it. In addition, President Madison had adopted Federalist policies, including a national bank and protective tariffs, which left the Federalists few issues to campaign on.

### **Activity 10: The Impact on New Jersey**

The inability of American forces to conquer Canada during the War of 1812 and the return to the status quo in the Treaty of Ghent ending the war convinced Federalists in New Jersey that the war had been futile and this was used to denigrate the policies of the Democratic-Republicans. The Democratic-Republicans, however, insisted that "the war was successful because it enshrined the image of the American citizen-soldier again defeating the professional armies of a despotic Europe" (*New Jersey: A History of the Garden States* by Lurie and Veit, p. 99). Although New Jersey voted for Federalist DeWitt Clinton in the 1812 presidential election, by 1816 the vote in New Jersey for president had shifted to the Democratic-Republic candidate, James Monroe, who won by a landslide. After the one-year term of federalist Aaron Ogden as governor in 1813, New Jersey returned to leadership by Democratic-Republicans. However, the parties shifted back and forth with Federalist Isaac Williamson serving as New Jersey's governor from 1817 to 1829, followed by a return to Republican-Democrats. The political parties and their messages in New Jersey, as in the rest of the country, were in flux during this period.

Historiography: Divide the class into two groups. Have one group write a "history" of the War of 1812 from the perspective of the editorial staff of the *Trenton Federalist*. Have the other group write from the

perspective of the *Centinel of Freedom*. Pair students and have them share their editorials with each other. Have the class discuss which view was more persuasive.

**Assessment:** Students will receive an exit card to check their understanding of the War of 1812. The exit cards will be collected by the teacher. Questions on the exit card may include:

- Explain the causes of the war of 1812.
- Explain the uneven impact of the Embargo Acts upon the northeastern states and the mid-western states?
- What do you think the people of New Jersey felt about the declaration of war against Britain in 1812? Support your position with evidence.
- How did national politics and events impact decisions by the people of New Jersey in the election of 1812?
- If the election of 1812 were to take place today, who would you align with-the Federalists or the Democratic-Republicans? Why?

**Additional resources: Fictional accounts of impressment:**

- In [Lucy M. Boston](#)'s second novel, [The Chimneys of Green Knowe](#) (1958), and its film adaptation by [Julian Fellowes](#), [From Time to Time](#) (2009), Fred Boggis narrowly escapes being kidnapped by jealous Sefton and unscrupulous Caxton, who plan to sell him into impressment and split the proceeds.
- In her novel [Sylvia's Lovers](#) (1863), [Elizabeth Gaskell](#) presents a description of impressment during the first phases of the Napoleonic wars.
- [Herman Melville](#)'s novella [Billy Budd, Sailor](#) (published posthumously in 1924) describes the impressment, subsequent treatment, and eventual [drumhead trial](#) of a sailor during the [Napoleonic Wars](#).
- Frank Tilsley's novel *Mutiny* (1958 and the movie it was made into, [H.M.S. Defiant](#) (1962, titled *Damn the Defiant!* in the U.S.), depict impressment.
- In Kate Worsley's debut novel, *She Rises* (2013), 15-year-old Luke is press-ganged and sent to sea on board the warship Essex.

## **Handout 1: Responses to British boarding of the *Chesapeake***

### **The Responsibility For The British Outrage**

*Washington National Intelligencer*, 10 July 1807

We are pleased to observe the circumspection of the merchants. If they consult their own interests, or that of the country, they will for a time repress their spirit of adventure, and run as few risks as possible, until an explicit answer shall be given by the British Ministry. As yet, it remains a point undetermined whether the late barbarous outrages have emanated directly from the British Cabinet, or are the acts exclusively of subordinate commanders. If they are directly authorized by the Cabinet, then we may calculate upon a scene of violence co-extensive with British power, and for another display of that perfidy so characteristic of its government. Every American vessel on the ocean will be seized and sent into some British port for adjudication, and the courts will take special care, if they do not forthwith proceed to condemnation, at any rate to keep the cases sub judice. Indeed, if the recent outrages do not emanate from the government, it is difficult to say whether they will not, notwithstanding, seize what they may consider a favorable opportunity to wreak their vengeance on this country,

### **The *Chesapeake* and the *Leopard***

New York Evening Post, 24 July 1807

We say and we once more repeat it, that the *Chesapeake*, being a national ship, was not liable to be searched for any purpose, nor to have any of her crew taken from her. This is ground that ought to be maintained at every hazard. But on the other hand, candor demands the concession, that it was in every way improper in the American commodore to enlist four deserters from the British man of war, knowing them to be such; and whether they were English subject, or had voluntarily enlisted and received their bounty (this being a conduct long since silently permitted by us), is immaterial. And we say further that if the Administration, on being applied to by the English consul, refused to accommodate the affair, but insisted on protecting the men by placing them under the national flag. The Administration thereby became criminal, and are answerable to the people for their culpable conduct.

## Handout 2: OGRABME, or The American Snapping-turtle



Primary Source Analysis: Have students carefully look at and analyze the OGRABME cartoon by responding to the following questions:

- Where do your eyes go first?
- What do the snapping turtle, the man with the barrel and the man trying to stop the turtle represent?
- What do the ship and the men on the shore in the background represent?
- What powerful words and ideas are expressed?

## Handout 2: Primary Source Analysis of OGRABME cartoon continued:

- What does “OGRABME” spell backwards?
- What was happening during this time period?
- What was the creator’s purpose in making this primary source? Was he supporting or opposing the Embargo Act?
- What does the creator do to get his or her point across?
- What was this primary source’s audience?
- What have you learned? Support your conclusions with specific evidence.

### Handout 3: Chart of Exports and Imports, 1805-1818

Year	Total Exports	Total U.S. Merchandise Exported	Imports
1805	95,566	42,387	120,600
1806	101,537	41,254	129,410
1807	108,348	48,699	138,500
1808	22,431	9,434	56,990
1809	52,208	31,405	59,400
1810	66,758	42,367	85,400
1811	61,317	45,294	53,400
1812	38,527	30,032	77,030
1813	27,856	25,008	22,005
1814	6,927	6,782	12,965
1815	52,558	45,975	113,041
1816	81,920	64,782	147,103
1817	87,672	68,314	99,250
1818	93,281	73,854	121,750

from Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945, prepared by the Bureau of the Census at the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1949, page 245. at

<http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/HistoricalStatisticsoftheUnitedStates1789-1945.pdf>

## Handout 4: Map of New Jersey



As you read “The Embargo’s Impact: Smuggling,” list the impact of the Embargo on the following locations:

1. Little Egg Harbor
2. Trenton
3. Middlesex
4. Perth Amboy
5. Newark
6. Richmond (Staten Island)
7. New York Harbor

**Handout 5: Excerpt from “New Jersey and the Embargo, 1807-1809,” New Jersey History, vol. 116, nos. 3-4, Fall/Winter 1998 by Harvey Strum**

Jefferson’s plan backfired. The Embargo of 1807 seriously harmed the American economy and led to the resurrection of the Federalists in New England, New York, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey. Because New Jersey lacked major ports, most of the export/import trade moved by way of New York and Philadelphia. New Jersey merchants dependent on the export/import trade were devastated. In Perth Amboy one firm reported, “The effects of the embargo here are very distressing and we are very sure that neither France nor England can suffer as much by a stopping of our trade as this country.”

The embargo hurt New Jersey farmers as well. According to New Jersey Federalists, the embargo produced a sharp decline in prices for surplus grain and produce that New Jersey farmers shipped or sold in New York and Philadelphia and estimated a loss of one million dollars annually. Wheat prices fell from a high of \$1.25 per bushel in Trenton in 1807 to \$1.00 per bushel in 1808. The cost of clearances required for every river craft to take produce to New York or Philadelphia also raised costs to farmers. The embargo reduced the value of horses, cattle, and other livestock by 25 percent. For farmers the embargo reduced not only prices but also demand.

....Smuggling from Perth Amboy was so widespread...that the port became “notorious as a point of embarkation for illegal traffic” to New England and then to Canada. Evidence suggests that some enterprising merchants and ship owners sent vessels as far as England....The American Consul in Liverpool reported in February 1809 that of the twenty embargo violators in his district, “four-fifths... appear to be from New York and New Jersey.”

## **Handout 6: Sloan Breaks with His Party**, excerpt from “James Sloan: Renegade or True Republican?” *New Jersey History* 125:1

In 1808, James Sloan broke with his party’s administration and with the majority of his Democratic Republican colleagues in Washington and in New Jersey...His increasing independence led to his exclusion from the congressional ticket in 1808. Four years later, Sloan broke with the Democratic Republican party to support a revival of Federalism in New Jersey...

James Sloan voted for the first Embargo Act and its first two supplements... By the end of April 1808, however, Sloan expressed doubts about the Embargo. As debate on the third supplement to the Embargo Act came to an end, Sloan continued to “profess his attachment to the embargo” but he also stated that the “details of the bill would be very injurious to divers[e] good people among his constituents and in other parts of the United States.” Even so, the House passed the bill by a vote of seventy three to twenty six. For the first time, Sloan opposed the policy so assiduously supported by the administration and the majority of his party. Sloan wrote his constituents and promised that he would not support “forging chains for you and your posterity.” Using language he once had directed against the Federalists, he pledged to no longer “enjoy the smiles of courtly sycophants and servile dependents upon executive patronage and the public treasury.”

Sloan’s change of heart on the Embargo reflected a growing disillusionment with his party and its leadership... In a speech to the House of Representatives on November 19, 1808, Sloan questioned the constitutionality of the Embargo. Congress, Sloan argued, had the constitutional power to regulate commerce, not to “annihilate” it. He further argued that continuance of the Embargo played into the hands of its intended victims: Great Britain and France. Additionally, it deprived the United States of profitable trade contacts. If the Embargo were lifted, Americans could trade with Spain and Portugal, where Napoleon’s armies were locked in an increasingly brutal war. Perhaps American trade could even deliver Iberia from the “rapacious fangs of the insatiable conqueror,” Napoleon Bonaparte. Simultaneously, the Embargo had caused increasing hardships among Sloan’s own New Jersey constituents, as well as among their commercial contacts in Philadelphia. In a second speech on December 27, 1808, Sloan described the Embargo as an instrument of oppression, enforceable only by “tyrannical” methods. Its repeal would preserve, not endanger, peace.

...In a letter accompanying his published speeches, Sloan saw the Embargo as a tool of “Southern Nabobs” who, “flushed with the election of another Virginia President,” wanted to “silence all opposition.”<sup>75</sup> Such rhetoric revealed much larger differences between the now lame-duck congressman and the Virginia leadership of his party. Sloan saw support for slavery and low political participation in Virginia as evidence that his political party did not truly practice the democracy it espoused. He saw a growing divergence between the concerns of the Virginians and his own constituency of small farmers, many of whom were Quakers. Additionally, he saw the impact of the Embargo on the commerce of Philadelphia, just across the river from his home in Newton Township. His involvement in ferrying people and produce across the river had undoubtedly left him very cognizant of the plight of his own constituents and their contacts across the Delaware River.

Sloan did not win re-nomination to Congress in 1808; the party replaced him with Jacob Hufty of Salem County. In a pamphlet published soon after leaving office, by which time Congress had repealed the Embargo, Sloan again dwelt on the two issues of importance to him: the Embargo and removal of the nation's capital from Washington to Philadelphia. He saw the Embargo as the "greatest evil these United States have experienced since the Revolutionary War."

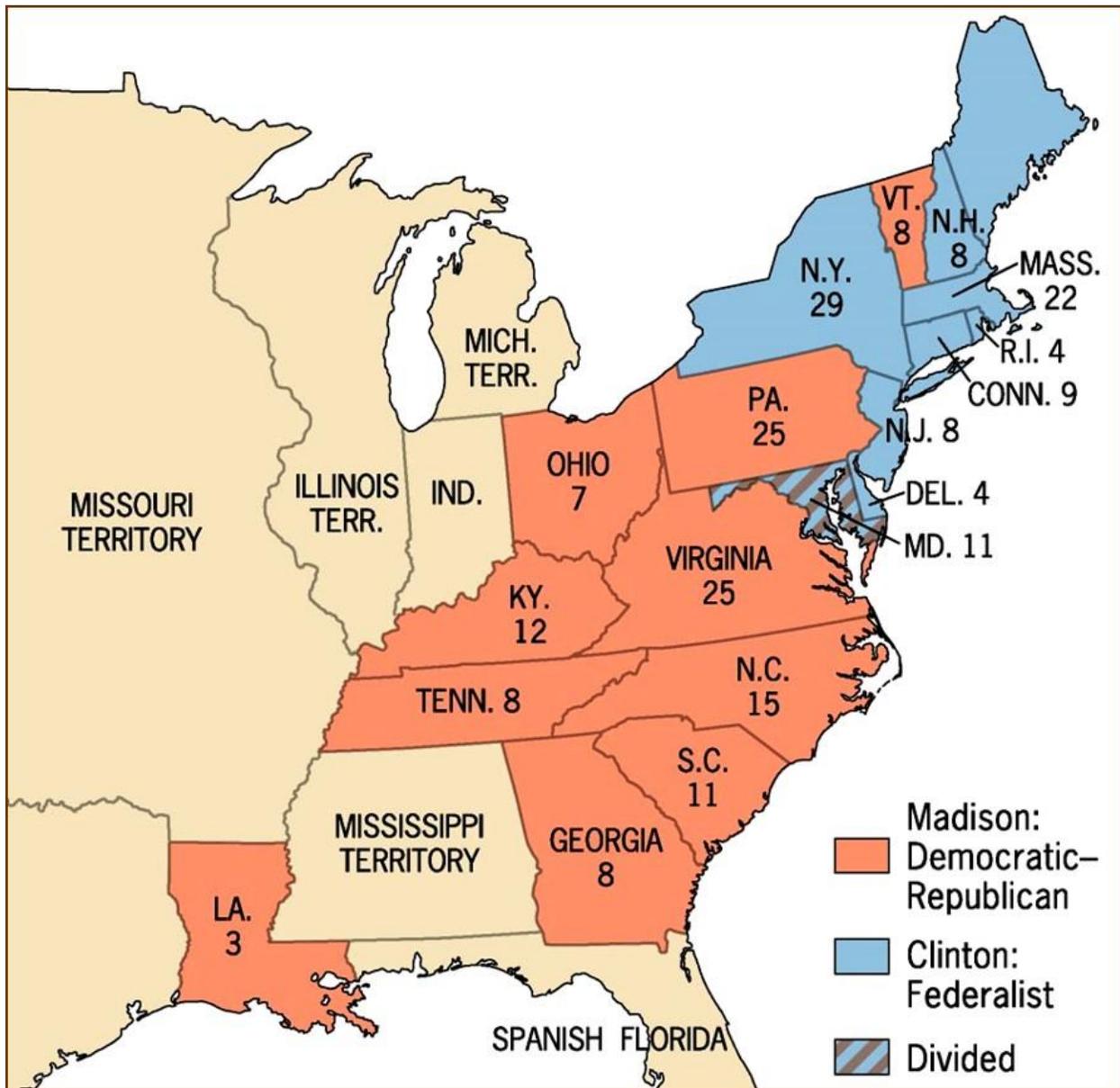
After reading the excerpt about Congressman James Sloan, complete the chart below. According to Sloan, why was the Embargo bad for the nation? The region? New Jersey?

Nation	Region	New Jersey

## Handout 7: House of Representatives Vote for War in 1812

State	Region	For	Against
NH	Frontier Northeast	3	2
VT		3	1
MA	Maritime and Federalist Northeast	6	8
RI		0	2
CT		0	7
NY	Commercial and Federalist Middle States	3	11
NJ		2	4
DE		0	1
PA	Jeffersonian Middle States	16	2
MD		6	3
VA	Jeffersonian Southern States	14	5
NC		6	3
SC		8	0
GA	Trans-Allegheny West	3	0
OH		1	0
KY		5	0
TN		3	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>49</b>

## Handout 8: Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1812



## Handout 9: New Jersey Newspaper editorials about the War of 1812

### Jonny Jump-ups!

*Trenton Federalist*, Trenton, NJ, Vol. XIV, Issue 710, page 3 (10-01-1812)

One cannot but be struck with the degradation of the country, in witnessing the airs and impudence of this kind of gosling fry among us. To hear them *talk* and *swagger*, it would seem as if they thought the whole country *rested upon their shoulders*. All our old revolutionary men—Men grown gray in the service of their country—Who hazarded everything in the revolutionary war, are without ceremony denounced as *tories* and *traitors*, by these upstarts of yesterday. They talk of *stopping the mouths* of those to whom they are indebted for every breath of liberty they ever drew. These chaps are *hot for war*—and if gostering, bragging, and bawling, would take Canada and level the walls of Quebec, the business had been done long ago. But shew them a *gun* and *bayonet*, with a little bit of paper to put their *names* to, and no mad-dogs fly the sight of water more quickly. Shallow as are their brains, and gross as is their ignorance, they'll let you know they have just sense *enough to keep out of the fire*. Then you see how quickly these Jonny Jump-ups can *Jump down*—and how much better the chimney corner is suited to their courage, than a Canadian campaign.

### The War a Righteous One

*Centinel of Freedom*, Newark, NJ, Vol. XVIII, Issue 6, page 1 (10-16-1813)

Almost all the Wars of Europe have been from motives of ambition, or for riches, or for some personal quarrel among their *Kings, Queens and Princes*. But the War which we have declared against England is a war of PRINCIPLE, a principle which our posterity on the seaboard will feel the good effects of through ages. If there ever was a righteous war since wars first began, it is the one in which we are engaged. It is a war that is to sweep from the ocean the slavery of its sons. It is a war that is to put an end to those sail water Dungeons, the Prison Shifts of England. It is a war in favor of the human race, against a nation that is an enemy to it! And to every thing beyond the limits of its own degenerated kingdom—Heaven will drown with a blessing these generous efforts in favor of oppressing humanity, and the conduct of our Executive and our heroes will be celebrated in future times with grateful admiration.

***LIST OF WAR TAXES***

*Trenton Federalist*, Trenton, NJ. Vol. XIV, Issue 710, Page 1 (10-05-1812)

1. A bill to lay and collect a direct tax within the United States (land tax).
2. A bill for the assessment and collection of direct taxes and internal duties.
3. A bill imposing additional duties on the tonnage of ships and vessels.
4. A bill to retain 25 per cent on the drawbacks allowed by law.
5. A bill laying a duty on *IMPORTED SALT*.
6. A bill to establish the office of commissioner of the revenues.
7. A bill to lay duties on licences to retailers of wines, spirituous liquors and foreign merchandize.
8. A bill to lay duties on carriages for the conveyance of persons.
9. A bill to lay duties on licences to DISTILLERS of spirituous liquors.
10. A bill laying duties on sales at auction of foreign merchandize, and of ships and vessels.
11. A bill laying duties on sugar refined within the United States.
12. A bill laying duties on bank notes and on notes of hand and foreign bills of exchange of a certain description—*STAMP TAX*.

Until these taxes can be raised the war is to be carried on by Treasury Notes, a kind of PAPER MONEY; by which the national debt will be increased many millions, and by which so many honest people were ruined in the last war.

When Canada shall be conquered by thus exhausting and ruining our selves—WHAT IS IT WORTH? We shall have a cold, in hospitable country, full of fortifications, military posts, and a large fortified city; all of which must be maintained at an enormous expense *from our own treasury*. The population of Canada *never has paid any tax to any government*, and never will. It has cost Britain many millions every year, and will be a constant drain on the United States both in men and money.

*Who then gains any thing by the conquest of Canada?*

The friends and parasites of power. Here will be a new government to be established; a large army to be stationed.

## Handout 9: New Jersey Newspaper editorials about the War of 1812

<p>Did you read anything surprising? If so, what and why?</p>	
<p>What political point of view do you think the <i>Centinel of Freedom</i> is expressing?</p>	
<p>What arguments does the <i>Centinel of Freedom</i> make in support of the war?</p>	
<p>Which political point of view do you think the <i>Trenton Federalist</i> is expressing?</p>	
<p>What arguments does the <i>Trenton Federalist</i> make against the war?</p>	
<p>Do you think the War of 1812 was in the best interests of New Jersey? Why or why not? Support your response with evidence.</p>	

# Handout 10: Electoral Map of the Presidential Election of 1816

