The **War of 1812** (1812–1815) was a conflict between the **United States** and **Great Britain**, often called America’s "Second War of Independence." It was fueled by trade disputes, territorial ambitions, and British interference in American affairs.

**Causes:**

1. **Impressment of American Sailors**:
   * The British Royal Navy forcibly recruited American sailors, claiming they were British deserters. This practice angered Americans and violated their sovereignty.
2. **Trade Restrictions**:
   * Britain and France were at war, and both imposed trade restrictions that hurt American commerce. The **British Orders in Council** hindered U.S. ships from trading freely.
3. **Support for Native Americans**:
   * Britain supplied weapons and support to Native American tribes resisting U.S. expansion in the Northwest Territory.
4. **War Hawks**:
   * A group of young Congressmen, known as **War Hawks** (led by **Henry Clay** and **John C. Calhoun**), pushed for war, seeking to defend national honor and expand U.S. territory, particularly into Canada.

**Major Events:**

1. **Declaration of War (June 18, 1812)**:
   * President **James Madison** signed the war declaration, making the United States the first country to declare war on another.
2. **Early Struggles**:
   * U.S. attempts to invade Canada were largely unsuccessful, and British forces burned key American towns in retaliation.
3. **Naval Battles**:
   * The U.S. Navy achieved surprising victories, including:
     + The USS **Constitution** ("Old Ironsides") defeating HMS Guerriere.
     + Captain **Oliver Hazard Perry's** victory on Lake Erie in 1813.
4. **British Offensive (1814)**:
   * British forces captured Washington, D.C., burning the **White House** and **Capitol** in August 1814.
   * They failed to capture **Baltimore**, inspiring **Francis Scott Key** to write "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the bombardment of **Fort McHenry**.
5. **The Battle of New Orleans (1815)**:
   * **Andrew Jackson** led American forces to a decisive victory over the British.
   * Ironically, the battle occurred after the war ended, as news of the treaty had not yet reached the U.S.

**Treaty of Ghent:**

1. **Signed on December 24, 1814**:
   * The treaty ended the war without territorial changes.
   * It restored pre-war boundaries and resolved none of the issues that caused the war, such as impressment.
2. **Ratification**:
   * The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty in February 1815, officially ending hostilities.

**Impact and Legacy:**

1. **National Pride**:
   * The war boosted American nationalism and confidence, proving the nation could stand up to a global power.
   * Figures like Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison became national heroes.
2. **Decline of Native Resistance**:
   * The war weakened Native American resistance in the Northwest Territory, accelerating U.S. expansion.
3. **End of the Federalist Party**:
   * The Federalists, who opposed the war, were discredited after the **Hartford Convention**, where they considered secession.
4. **"Era of Good Feelings"**:
   * Post-war, there was a period of political unity and economic growth, with less partisan strife.
5. **Strengthened U.S. Industry**:
   * The war encouraged domestic manufacturing as trade with Europe was disrupted.