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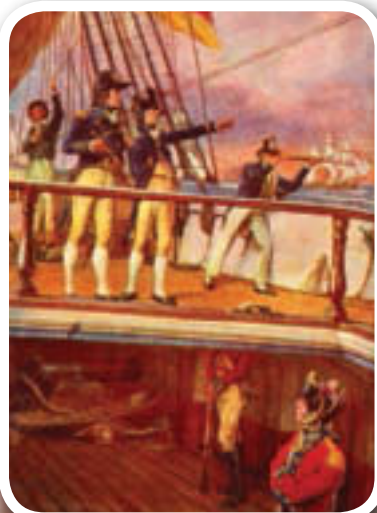
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

American flag



# The War of 1812

British navy



Americans and British make peace



American victory on Lake Erie



Rosie McCormick

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# The War of 1812

Rosie McCormick



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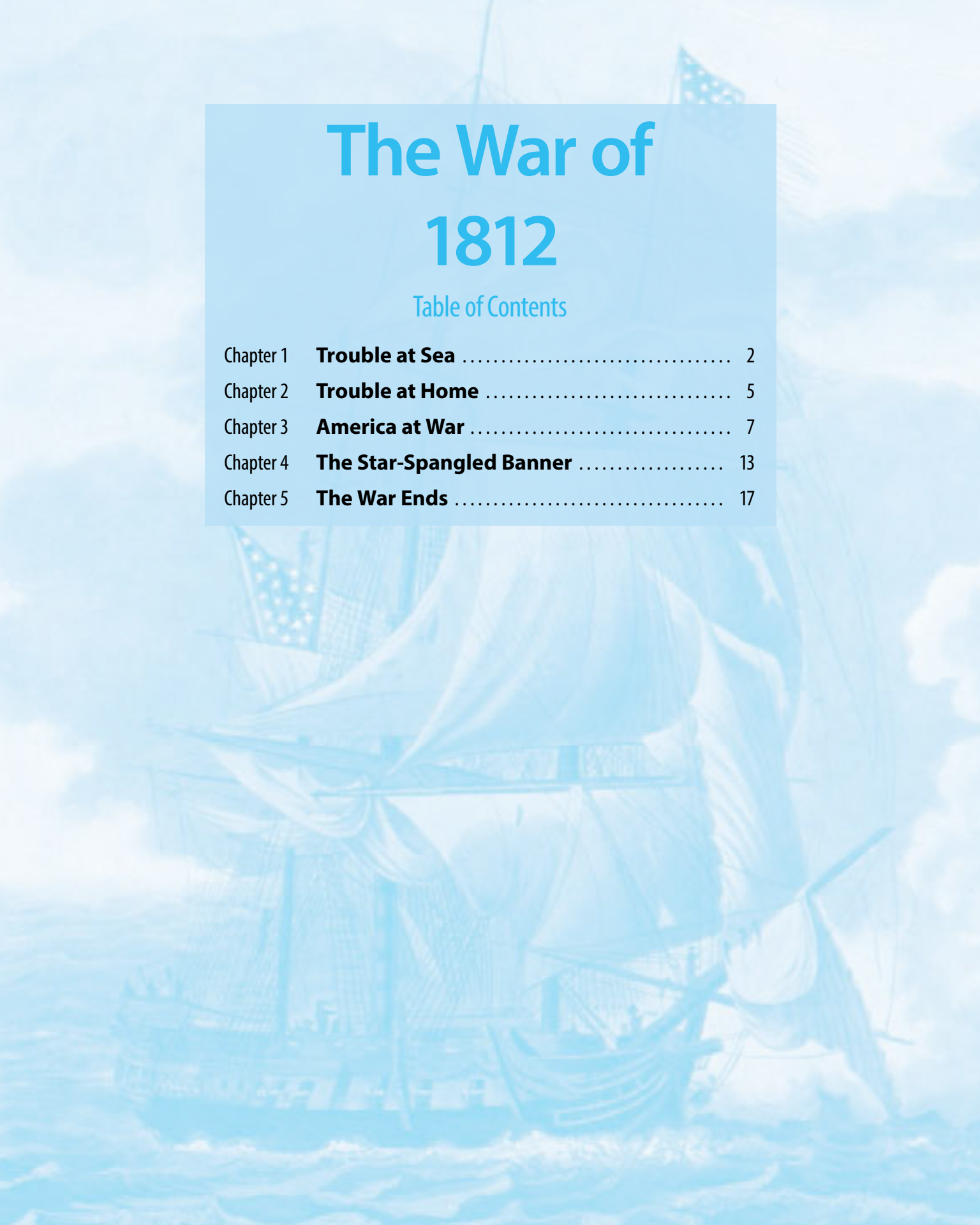
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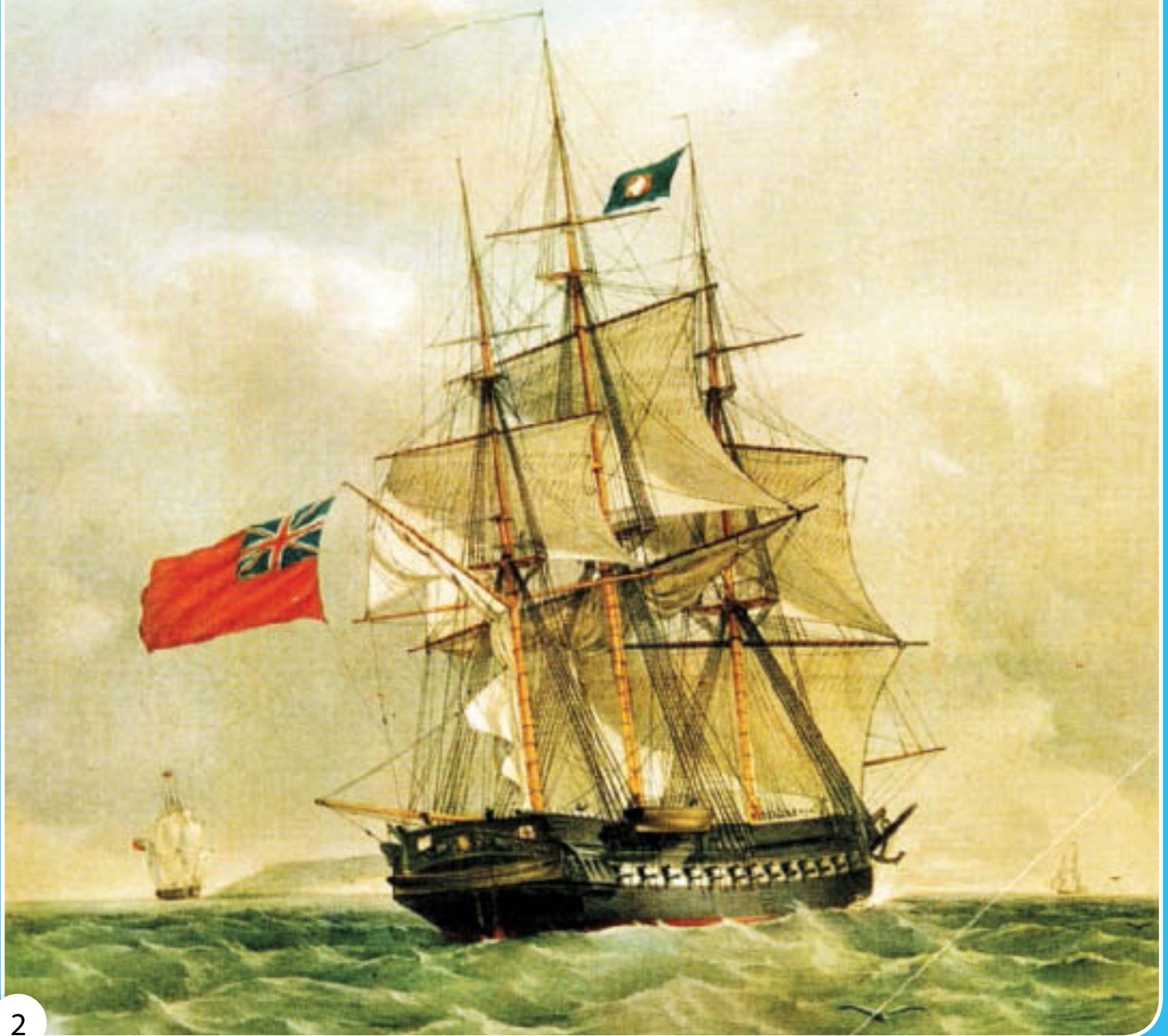
# The War of 1812

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## Trouble at Sea

In the early 1800s, American ships sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe carrying tobacco, tools, lumber, and other goods to sell. In Europe, cloth was loaded onto ships to be brought back to America. Sometimes, British warships followed and stopped American trade ships.





The British not only stopped American ships, they came aboard and searched them too. They were looking for runaway British sailors. You see, Great Britain was at war with France. Britain's Royal Navy had many powerful ships, but it did not have enough sailors. Oftentimes, British sailors did not want to fight in the war, so they ran away to work on trade ships.





Great Britain did these things because it believed it had the right to capture British sailors who were needed to fight in the war with France. If the British found any runaways, they tied them up and took them away. This is called impressment. Sometimes the British took American sailors as well. This made Americans very angry!





## Trouble at Home

Trouble at sea turned into trouble at home. In the early 1800s, Americans were moving west into present-day Ohio and Indiana. A Native American Shawnee chief named Tecumseh wanted to stop the settlers moving west onto Native American land.

Tecumseh knew that the Native Americans needed guns to defend their land. But where could they get these weapons? One place was from Canada, which was controlled by the British. The British did not want Americans to move close to Canada. So the British secretly agreed to help Tecumseh.

Tecumseh



Tecumseh united many Native American tribes against the American settlers. This made the American government nervous. In 1811, the United States sent soldiers to a Native American camp at Tippecanoe Creek in Indiana. The American soldiers killed many Native Americans. This is known as the Battle of Tippecanoe. The next year, in 1812, war broke out between the United States and Great Britain.



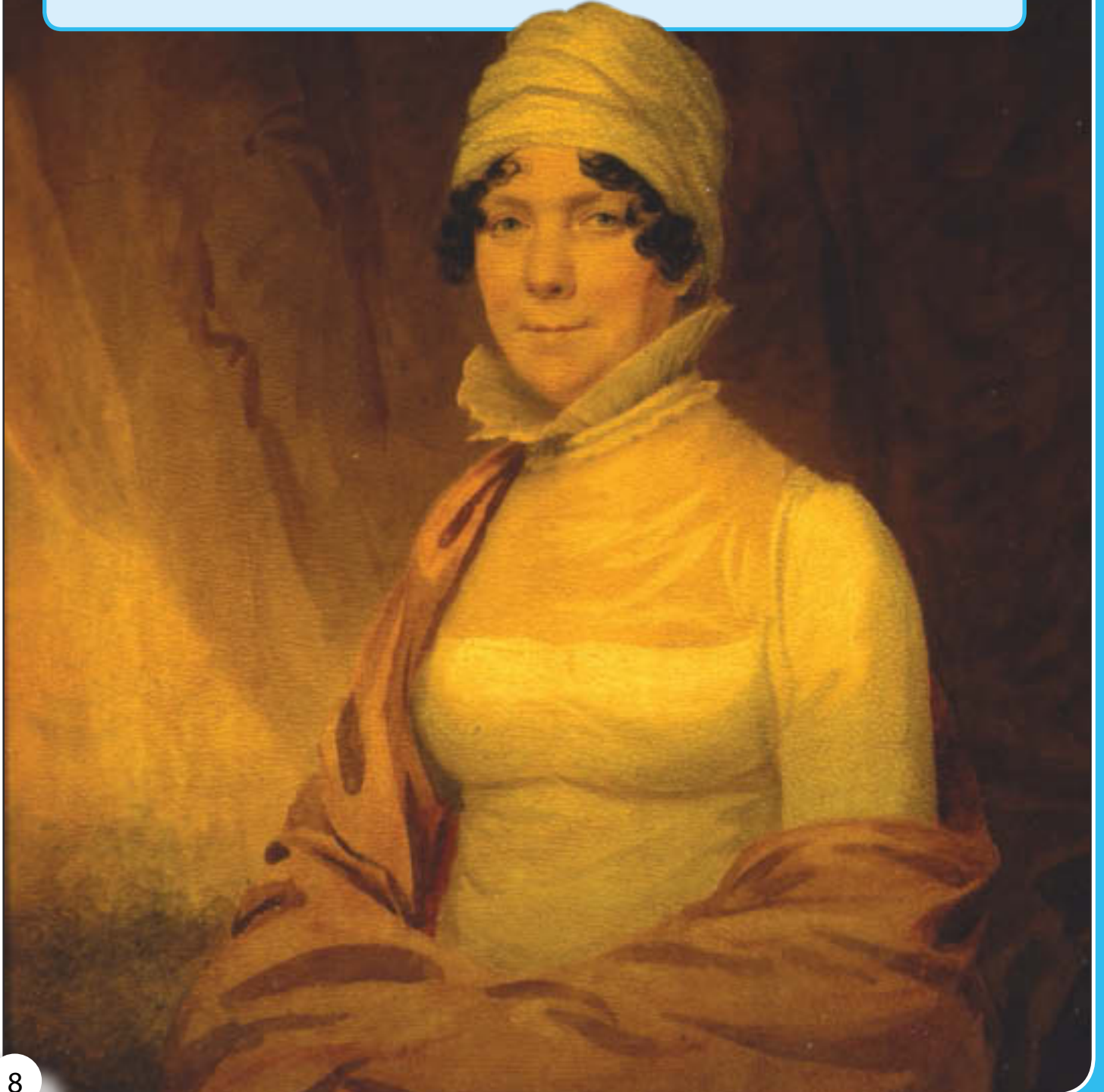


## America at War

James Madison was the president of the United States when war broke out in 1812. He had not wanted to go to war with Great Britain. However, some members of the American Congress, who were angry with the British, did! They were known as War Hawks.



James Madison had first gone to Washington to help President Thomas Jefferson run the government. Both men believed that government should work for the good of the people. When he became president himself, his wife, Dolley, often advised him when he had to make difficult decisions.





James Madison's government hoped to force the British out of Canada. The U.S. Army tried several times to do this. However, they did not succeed. American soldiers did capture and burn the Canadian town of York, today known as Toronto, but were soon forced to retreat.



The U.S. Army also fought Native Americans loyal to the British. In the battle of Thames, in 1813, American soldiers defeated a group of Native Americans and killed Tecumseh.



For a while, America had more success against the British on water than on land. On Lake Erie, American warships defeated British warships.



The most famous American warship was the *USS Constitution*. The *USS Constitution* defeated a number of British warships at sea.

The *USS Constitution* earned the name “Old Ironsides” when an American sailor said that British cannonballs seemed to bounce off the side of the ship but never to damage it.





As the months passed, both sides had some victories and some defeats. Then the British tried a daring move. They marched into Washington, D.C. They set fire to the capital city. By the time the British arrived at the president's house, the Madisons were gone.





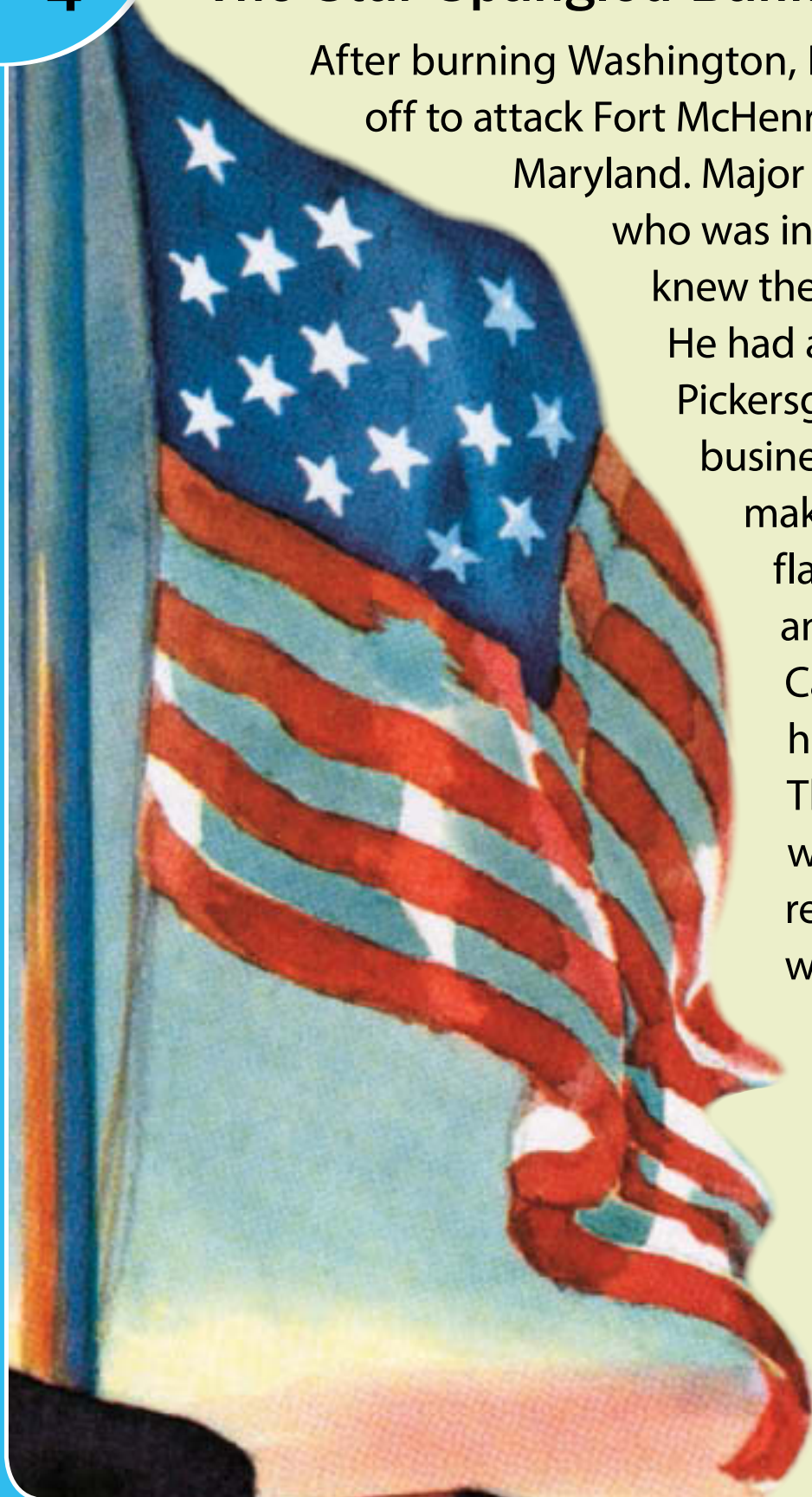
Before she left, Dolley Madison wanted to make sure that certain important government papers, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, and a portrait of George Washington were saved. An enslaved African American named Paul Jennings, with help from others, actually saved the portrait just in time!





## The Star-Spangled Banner

After burning Washington, D.C., the British set off to attack Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. Major George Armistead, who was in charge of the fort, knew they were coming. He had asked Mary Young Pickersgill, the owner of a business that made flags, to make a giant American flag for the fort. Mary and her daughter Caroline used four hundred yards of wool. The stars on the flag were two feet high. Its red and white stripes were each two feet wide. This was a flag that the British would see from far away.

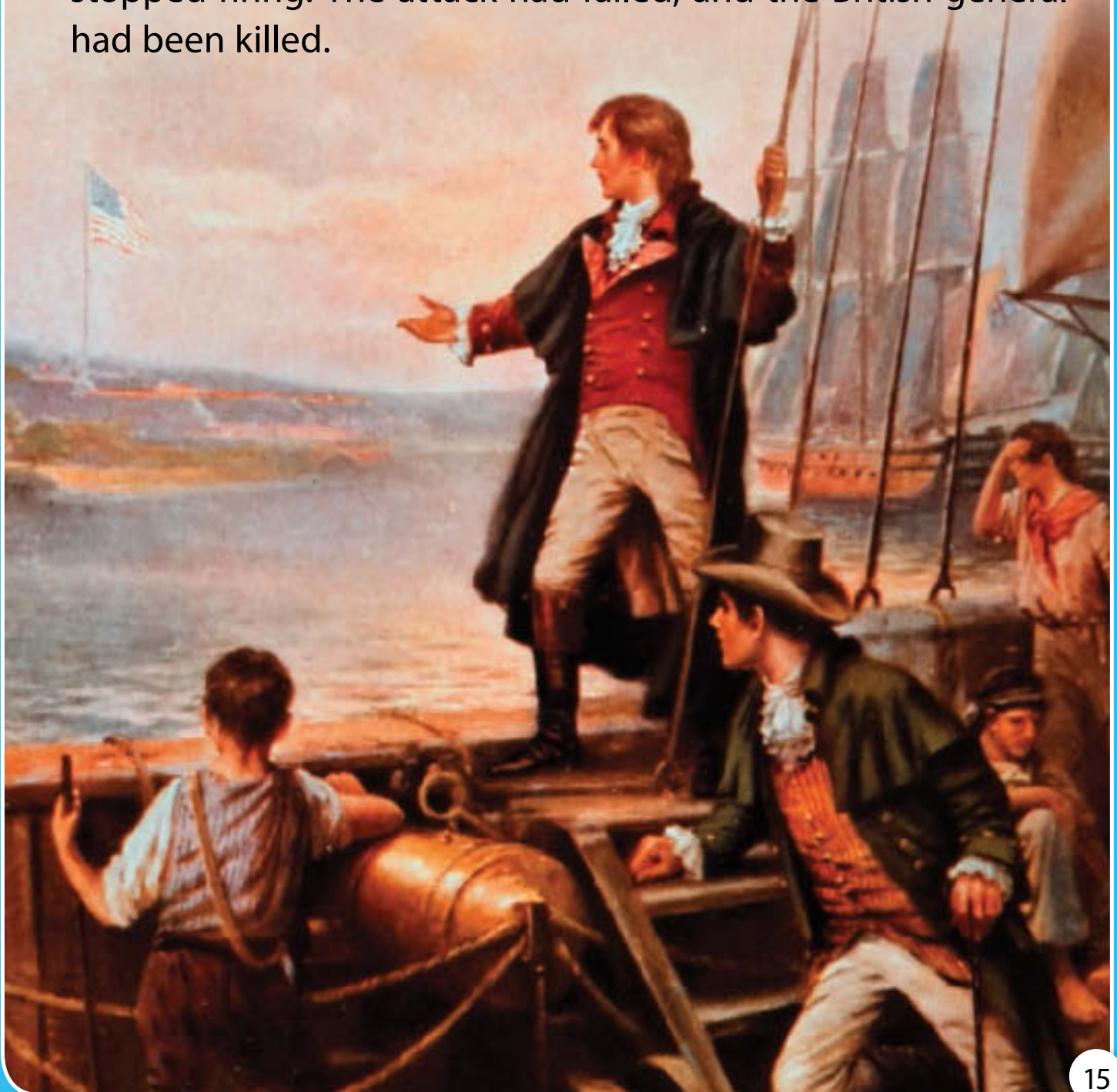


British warships opened fire on Fort McHenry. All day and all night, their guns fired at the fort. Guns inside the fort fired back. Smoke filled the air. British soldiers also tried to fight their way into the fort.





A man named Francis Scott Key watched the battle as it happened. It was impossible to tell who was winning. Then, at dawn's first light, Key saw that the huge American flag was still flying above Fort McHenry! It had holes in it, and was burned around the edges, but the flag was still there. Soon, the British stopped firing. The attack had failed, and the British general had been killed.



Francis Scott Key wrote a poem on the back of an envelope about what he had just witnessed. He called the poem "The Star-Spangled Banner."

A few days later, the poem was printed in newspapers around the country. Later, the poem was set to an old British tune. Today, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States of America:

*O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's  
last gleaming,*

*Whose broad stripes and bright stars through  
the perilous fight*

*O'er the ramparts we watch'd were so  
gallantly streaming?*

*And the rocket's red glare, the bombs  
bursting in air,*

*Gave proof through the night that our  
flag was still there,*

*O say does that star-spangled banner  
yet wave*

*O'er the land of the free and the home  
of the brave?*

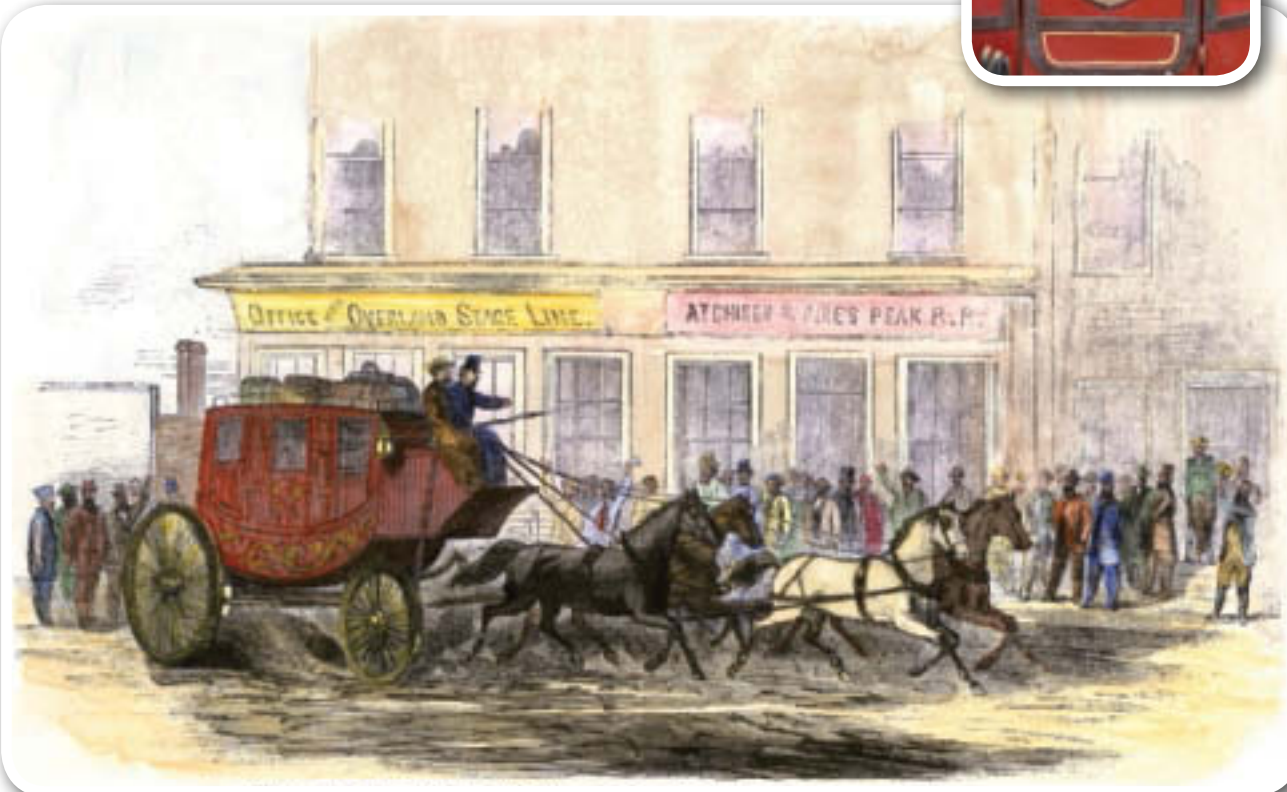


## The War Ends

In late 1814, American and British government officials met in Europe to talk about ending the war. It took several months for them to work out an agreement. Then, on Christmas Eve, December 24, both sides signed a peace treaty.



How did people hear about the peace treaty? Well in 1814, there were no telephones. There weren't any televisions or computers either. News was often written down in letters that were carried slowly by ship and by mail coach.



So while the government officials were talking of peace, American and British soldiers were still getting ready for the biggest battle of the war in New Orleans, Louisiana.





The U.S. Army was led by Andrew Jackson, who would later become president of the United States. Before the Battle of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson had cruelly defeated Native Americans in what is today Alabama and parts of Georgia. Now, he faced the British Army.



The British thought they would easily defeat Jackson's army. But this did not happen. The Americans won the Battle of New Orleans, fought on January 8, 1815. A few days after the battle, news arrived in Washington, D.C., that the peace treaty to end the war had been signed three weeks earlier.



Not much changed after the War of 1812. Settlers continued to move west and take Native American land. The British did not promise to stop capturing sailors, and they didn't leave Canada. But America had fought the strongest army and navy in the world and had held its own. Americans felt proud of their country. To show their pride, they began to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and to honor the American flag.



**THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER**



# Battles of the War of 1812









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