The Growth of Anti-British Attitudes in Kentucky Prior to War of 1812

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THE GROWTH OF ANTI-BRITISH ATTITUDES IN KENTUCKY PRIOR TO WAR OF 1812

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THE GROWTH OF ANTI-BRITISH ATTITUDES IN 
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Roger H. Brown in The Republic in Peril: 1812 has suggested that causation of the War of 1812 must be examined on two levels in order to achieve a complete explanation for the United States' entry into that controversial conflict. Brown argued that national politicians responded to public unrest over the actions of England and France rather than to the actual problems arising between the United States and the belligerents. The problems were the concerns of the people, while the unrest was the concern of the politicians. Because the Republicans feared a resurgence of the Federalist party on the national level, they attempted to alleviate the growing dissatisfaction upon which the Federalists might capitalize in the elections of 1812. Thus, the decision for war was made by Republican politicians on the national level in order to maintain the supremacy of the Republican party, which they equated with the maintenance of a republican form of government in the nation. Seen in this light, the decision was not a selfish decision made by a party, but rather a carefully considered

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decision designed with the best interest (in Republican eyes) of the nation in mind. ²

Brown found that the primary concern of the men in Congress and in the administration, was not over the crisis itself but rather over the ways in which the crisis affected the people and thus the nation's political situation. In Brown's study, therefore the local response to the crisis is far more important than the causes for this response.

The purpose of this study is to examine the causes of belligerency in Kentucky in this period of diplomatic crisis, thus examining the second level of causation for the war as suggested by Brown's study. The test case used is Kentucky which was known as one of the states most anxious for war against Britain, both in Congress and in the state itself. However, this study will not attempt to interpret the role of the state's representatives in the Congress of the United States, since, if Brown is correct in his interpretation, the causes of public belligerency

²Bitterness was very intense in this period between the two parties. The differences were not thought to be merely over petty political questions, but were conceived to be differences over the form of government that the country should have. To the Federalists the Republicans seemed to be the same type of people who convulsed France in the French Revolution, and Republican victory meant revolution and, worst of all, democracy. The Republicans, on the other hand, saw the Federalists as monarchists who would use any means available, after winning the election, to end freedom and liberty in the United States.
had little to do with the final declaration of war. When a member of Congress is quoted, it is because his statements summarize the feeling of the people in Kentucky. Thus there is little attempt to relate the voting or speeches of various representatives to the causes of belligerent attitudes of Kentuckians, except in ways in which these prominent Kentuckians reflect the backgrounds and attitudes of their less articulate neighbors. The role of the Kentucky Congressmen of the Twelfth Congress in bringing war, a role which has been extensively studied in many other works, thus falls outside the scope of this study.

In such a study as this, the researcher is indebted to many people to such an extent that simple thanks is small recompense for their troubles and efforts. I would like to thank Drs. Lowell H. Harrison and J. Crawford Crowe of Western Kentucky University who supervised the writing of this thesis; Ms. Julia Neal and the staff of the Kentucky Library at Western Kentucky; Ms. Martha Clark and the staff of the Margie Helms-Cravens Library at Western Kentucky; James Bentley and the staff of The Filson Club in Louisville; the staffs of the Louisville Free Public Library, the University of Louisville Libraries, the University of Kentucky Library, the University of Tennessee Library, the Kentucky State Library, the Kentucky State Historical Society, and the Circuit Court Law Library in
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Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. Jonathan Utley of the University of Tennessee whose class in United States diplomatic history allowed me to express my views and defend them against the criticisms of the class, and by doing this clarify those ideas in my mind.

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CHAPTER I

INDIANS, SPAIN AND PROSPERITY

In the first years of the nineteenth century most of the citizens of the Ohio Valley were pro-French and anti-British. The roots of these attitudes went back several years to the American Revolution when France under Louis XVI played a large role in the winning of American independence. This combined with the Jeffersonians' initial philosophical sympathy for the aims of the French Revolution to influence western attitudes toward the French Republic and the Napoleonic reign. On the other hand, Kentuckians had never quite forgiven the British for using the savage redman against the fledgling settlements of the Bluegrass. Stories of Indian depredations were still discussed throughout the state, and Colonel Henry Hamilton, the "Hair-buyer," the British official accused of inciting the Indians against the settlements, was an all too real memory to many Kentuckians. Tennessee Senator Felix Grundy's story of his early life in Kentucky, which reflected the western fear and hatred of the Indians, was recounted before the Senate. His story would not seem to be unique. Grundy stated that

I was too young to participate in these
[earliest] dangers and difficulties, but I can remember when death was in almost every bush, and every thicket concealed an ambuscade. If I am asked to trace my memory back and name the first indelible impression it received, it would be the sight of my eldest brother bleeding and dying under the wounds inflicted by the tomahawk and scalping knife. Another and another went the same way! I have seen a widowed mother plundered of her whole property in a single night. . . . Sir, the ancient sufferings of the West were great.1

Memories such as these were long in disappearing.

The British compounded this distrust and hatred in the 1790's with their holding of the Northwestern forts lying on American soil, from which they were accused of inciting the Indians. Further distrust was created by the American fear that England would try to regain her former colonies at any cost. Although this fear may have been ungrounded, it certainly created much disturbance in the West.2

In the first years of the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Northwest territories were being opened to American settlers, which led to the inevitable clash between the frontier farmers and the Indian hunters.3 In order to

1Quoted in Christopher B. Coleman, "The Ohio Valley in the Preliminaries of the War of 1812," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII (June 1920), 43.

2Robert B. McAfee, History of the Late War in the Western Country (Ann Arbor, 1966; originally published Lexington, 1816), 1.

secure lands for these new settlers, and to stop the Indian raids into Kentucky, the United States government sent three expeditions into the Northwest to deal with the savages. The first of these expeditions was led by General Henry Harmar who was defeated late in 1790 in the Ohio territory in his effort to stop the Indian raids at their source. 4 Heartened by their victory, the Indians resumed their raids with increased hostility. 5 To alleviate this problem, General Arthur St. Clair, another regular army officer, led an expedition into the territory north of the Ohio River in late 1792, to disperse the Indians living there. St. Clair was not capable at his advanced age of leading a successful attack against the Indians. Camping on the banks of the upper Wabash River in the Ohio territory, St. Clair, his ranks depleted by desertion, failed to build a strong defensive line, and delayed this chore until the next day.

Because of this error, when an Indian attack came shortly before dawn St. Clair's men were driven back and soundly defeated. Retreating back to Fort Washington (on the present site of Cincinnati), the regulars and militia under the general left approximately six hundred men either

4Ibid., 20-21; McAfee, War in the Western Country, 2; Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (Lexington, 1960), 97.

5Prucha, Sword of the Republic, 22.
killed or captured.6 Harmar and St. Clair knew almost nothing of Indian warfare, and their failures made Kentuckians reluctant to serve against the Indians in further expeditions led by regular army officers.7 The inability of the government to deal effectively with the Indians and their white allies was "alarming . . . to Kentucky." Many Kentuckians blamed the failure of these expeditions upon poor management by the generals involved, but placed the blame for the savage warfare upon the British.8

For the next campaign into the western territories, President George Washington chose General "Mad" Anthony Wayne. Wayne, taking more time to prepare than his predecessors, made extensive use of spies and scouts and in June, 1794, with the aid of General Charles Scott and 1,600 mounted Kentucky militiamen, marched into Indian territory where he routed the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.9 The battle ended the Indian problem in Kentucky for some time and led to the Treaty of Greenville which further opened the Northwest territories to settlement.10

6Ibid., 25-26; Clark, History of Kentucky, 98-99.
7Clark, History of Kentucky, 99.
8Samuel McDowell to Andrew Reid, December 8, 1971, Papers of Samuel McDowell (The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).
9Prucha, Sword of the Republic, 36-37.
10Clark, History of Kentucky, 99-100.
All of these Indian raids were blamed upon the British and their efforts of arming and advising the savages. The Americans accused the British (from their positions in the Northwest territories rightfully belonging to the United States) of stirring the Indians into violence. 11 Robert B. McAfee, chronicler of the War of 1812, saw further evidence of British intervention in what Americans insisted was a purely domestic affair. He charged the British commander of Detroit with directly encouraging the Indians in the Battle of Fallen Timbers from a recently built fort near the site of the battle. In addition to encouragement and supplies, many British-Canadians were accused of fighting beside their Indian allies. McAfee felt the period of peace following the Battle of Fallen Timbers resulted from the realization by the Indians that the British could not effectively defend them. 12

Kentuckians felt that without the aid of the British the frontier farmers could easily oust the Indians from the desired lands. 13 The idea that this ousting might not be

12 McAfee, War in the Western Country, 4-6.
13 Robert McNutt McElroy, Kentucky in the Nation's History (New York, 1909), 193-95. Surprisingly, the Kentuckians were opposed to the Jay Treaty when it was first made public. This attitude changed, however, when the British troops were withdrawn from the Northwestern forts.
just was not considered by the settlers who saw the Indian as a barrier to what the westerners thought was justly theirs. In the mind of the frontiersmen, God had given the white man the lands west of the mountains for their own use and increase; the Indians were just so much vermin to be exterminated or driven away. Although Fallen Timbers brought peace to the frontiers of Kentucky, the settlers still believed that the British were active in inciting the Indians and keeping them hostile to the citizens of the West.

Thus the memories of the previous Anglo-Indian alliances and the fear of future cooperation between the wily and ruthless Indians and their British allies invoked both aversion and anxiety in the minds of the westerners. In 1803, when European war recommenced, this attitude brought an anti-British bias, which was shown in countless war reports in Kentucky newspapers citing the tyranny of England.


15 McAfee, War in the Western Country, 7.

16 Most battle reports printed in Kentucky newspapers tended to be pro-French. An example of the criticism of the British can be found in The Danville Informant, April 3, 1806, and other newspapers.
Although the Kentuckians generally were pro-French, they were not ready to aid Napoleon in his struggle against the British. Kentuckians were determined to enjoy the prosperity promised by the opening of the Northwest territories following the Jay Treaty and the Treaty of Greenville and the prosperity brought about by their neutrality in the European struggle. The periodic opening of the Mississippi to American commerce increased this prosperity and made the westerners reluctant to meddle in foreign affairs. Only in 1802 when this prosperity was threatened did the Kentuckians express more than casual interest in foreign relations.

As holder of the mouth of the Mississippi, Spain could regulate all western commerce exported through this vital natural waterway. Since the costs of transporting produce across the mountains was prohibitive, the western river system provided the only practical method of getting frontier goods to market. As early as the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty, the West had expressed vigorous concern regarding the rights of navigation and deposit claimed through the Anglo-American Treaty of 1783. Far from accepting this claim, the Spanish refused throughout the first twenty years of American independence to allow these rights to the

17 McAfee, War in the Western Country, 7.
18 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 48.
citizens of the United States on a permanent basis. 
Through the efforts of William Pinckney, the United States 
did obtain the right of deposit at New Orleans, but this 
right, in practicality, remained under the control of 
Spain. 19

On October 16, 1802, after several years of free use 
of the river, Kentuckians found the port of New Orleans 
closed to their commerce. 20 This could prove to be ruinous 
to the farmers of the Ohio Valley who depended upon the 
exportation of their surplus to show a profit. 21 Kentucky 
had exported $1,182,804 worth of goods through New Orleans 
in 1802 and with the removal of the right of deposit, this 
might be reduced to a trickle. 22 Although the Kentuckians 
were dismayed with the closing of the river, they 
suppressed their initial response and waited for the national 
government to effect a solution through diplomatic 
channels. 23

19 A complete narrative of Pinckney's Treaty can be 
found in Samuel Flagg Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty; America's 
Advantage from Europe's Distress, 1783-1800 (New Haven, 
1960; originally published, 1926).

20 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 95.


22 Lowell H. Harrison, John Breckinridge; Jeffersonian 
Republican (Louisville, 1969), 149.

23 Ibid.; Bailey, Diplomatic History, 95-96.
Meeting in December, 1802, the Kentucky General Assembly drew up a resolution stating that they pledged with their "lives and fortunes such measures as the honor or interest of the United States may require." Such was the faith in the Jefferson administration, that as important an issue as the use of the Mississippi River could be left completely in his hands. Although the General Assembly was willing to put complete trust in Jefferson, some citizens of the state expressed more violent sentiments. William Bradford and William Stevenson expressed assurances that troops could be raised in sufficient numbers to open the port and Charles Smith wrote Senator John Breckinridge that the port of New Orleans must be opened or Kentuckians would take direct action. Some citizens of the Commonwealth went so far as to organize a volunteer army for an assault upon New Orleans.

On Friday, December 24, 1803, Breckinridge presented the resolution of the Kentucky General Assembly to the Senate. Breckinridge agreed with the temper of the resolution and was completely willing to allow the

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24 Lexington Kentucky Gazette, December 7, 1802.  
25 Harrison, Breckinridge, 149.  
26 Kentucky Gazette, March 29, 1803.  
27 The Debates and Proceedings in the Congresses of the United States, 7 Cong., 2 Sess., 17 (Dec. 24, 1802). This source will hereafter be referred to as Annals of Congress.
President a free hand in the handling of the situation. Jefferson showed that he was aware of the situation in the West when he sent the name of James Monroe to the Senate to be confirmed as a special envoy to join Robert Livingston who had been negotiating with France concerning the purchase of New Orleans. Although Monroe was given no more power than Livingston, Jefferson thought that the West would have more confidence in his actions and that his appointment would help alleviate some of the discontent in the western areas.

The Federalists in the West hoped to use this diplomatic situation to increase their power in their home territories. James Ross of Pittsburgh, the only western Senator from the minority party, brought the question of the closing of the river before the Senate on February 14, 1803. He called for Congress to authorize the raising of troops, and for the President to seize such points as would allow the United States free navigation of the river.

This touched off much discussion in the Senate for and against the Ross resolution. Rising on February 23, 1803,

28 Harrison, Breckinridge, 150.
29 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 97.
30 Ibid., 95.
Breckinridge presented his case concerning the controversy. Denying that the state of Kentucky would reject the pacific actions of the President, Breckinridge asserted that they were willing to wait until the negotiations were given a chance to succeed. Then, thought Breckinridge, if the negotiations should fail, the United States should be ready to take more militant action. In accordance with this sentiment, Breckinridge presented a series of resolutions that would put the decision concerning offensive action in the hands of the President.

Breckinridge’s proposals stated that:

Resolved, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorized, whenever he shall judge it expedient, to require of the Executives of the several States to take effectual measures to organize, arm and equip, according to law, and hold in readiness to march at a moment’s warning eighty thousand effective militia, officers included.

Resolved, That the President may, if he judges it expedient, authorize the Executives of the several States to accept, as part of the detachment aforesaid, any corps of volunteers; who shall continue in service for such time, not exceeding ______ months, and perform such services as shall be prescribed by law.

Resolved, That _________ dollars be appropriated for paying and subsisting such part of the troops aforesaid, whose actual service may be wanted, and for defraying such other expenses as, during the recess of Congress, the President may deem necessary for the security of the territory of the United States.

Resolved, That _________ dollars be appropriated for erecting, at such place or places on
the western waters, as the President may judge most proper, one or more arsenals.\(^{32}\)

Breckinridge's proposal stirred new debate, and when a vote was finally taken on February 25, 1803, the Ross resolutions were defeated 15 to 11, with the balloting strictly along party lines. When Breckinridge's proposal was presented in its place, it passed 25 to 0.\(^{33}\) Breckinridge prevented the Federalists from embarrassing the administration and kept the final decision-making power concerning the use of force in the control of Jefferson.

As the people of Kentucky waited patiently for news of the Monroe mission to France, events began to unfold in Paris. Napoleon was disheartened by the failure to quell the revolution on Santo Domingo led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, and he felt that in the event of renewed war, Louisiana would be difficult to defend against superior British naval power. He may have believed that it was better to sell the territory to the United States than let it fall to Britain for nothing. Therefore, he offered to sell the entire territory to the United States.\(^{34}\)

When rumors began circulating in Kentucky concerning the transaction, many people were skeptical, but when the

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 115-19 (Feb. 23, 1803).

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 255 (Feb. 25, 1803); Harrison, Breckinridge, 152.

\(^{34}\)Bailey, Diplomatic History, 98-100.
reports were confirmed, great jubilation broke out in all parts of the Commonwealth. 35 This rejoicing was reflected by the many public celebrations held across the state. 36 It appeared that the Kentuckians had finally achieved their great goal, the permanent opening of the Mississippi for the exportation of their crops.

This jubilation soon turned to anger as the Spanish officials in New Orleans refused to part with the recently ceded territory. When news of the Spanish resistance reached Washington, Jefferson departed from his pacific position and ordered the raising of western militiamen for the seizing of America's newly acquired prize. 37

When Kentucky was asked to muster 4,000 troops for the expedition, the request was favorably received. General Samuel Hopkins of Kentucky claimed that the western country was "all on fire!" as the frontiersmen enthusiastically supported the call to arms. 38 Business was reported to be at a standstill due to the enlisting of almost every man in

35 Ibid., 102; Clark, History of Kentucky, 115.

36 Harrison, Breckinridge, 161; McElroy, Kentucky in Nation's History, 274.

37 Clark, History of Kentucky, 116.

38 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 105; Robert Breckinridge McAfee, Journal, 1803-1807, McAfee Papers (The Filson Club), 8, 11, 12.
the state for service against the Spanish. The bounty of 150 acres of land to every man joining the expedition may have induced many to enlist, although the general determination to procure the newly won territory was the motivating force in many instances. Whatever their motives, the troops were very anxious to march against the Spanish, and their belligerence grew as the expedition was delayed. Whether or not Jefferson was seriously considering forceful measures or was bluffing, the Spanish, realizing that resistance would mean war with both the buyer and seller, responded to this threat. The Spanish officials peacefully handed the territory over to the French who then turned authority over to the United States.

The following months were filled in Kentucky with celebrations of America's recent purchase. Throughout April and May of 1804, local celebrations were held around the state expressing Kentucky's approval of the transaction. Kentuckians had realized from this affair that their interests were involved with foreign relations, and

39 Clark, History of Kentucky, 116; Harrison, Breckinridge, 166.
40 Harrison, Breckinridge, 166.
41 McAfee, Journal, 1803-1807, 16.
42 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 105-06.
43 Harrison, Breckinridge, 175.
that the actions of powers across the seas could affect their prosperity and well-being. Thus the first year of renewed European war passed with little concern expressed by the people of Kentucky regarding the epic struggle between the French and English. Most Kentuckians were far too concerned with the occurrences nearer to their homes with the Spanish than with the power struggle on the continent of Europe.

The opening of the Mississippi River was the beginning of a period of rapid western expansion. The river provided an outlet for the produce of the western country, and the influx of settlers passing through to the new lands added to the increased wealth of the state. 44 Though there was a definite anti-British feeling in the West, most citizens of the state were willing to follow the advice of the Washington, Kentucky Weekly Messenger to remain neutral in the struggle between the European powers. 45 Affluence seemed a permanent reality and most people were concerned with taking advantage of the increased financial opportunities. The western farmers truly thought that all barriers


45 Washington (Ky.) Weekly Messenger, Sept. 15, 1803.
to prosperity were removed. Promise of financial well-being seemed to be fulfilled. 46

Throughout 1804 and 1805, although the United States had trouble with Spain along the Southwestern boundary, the people of Kentucky were not yet openly concerned with France and Great Britain. In his annual message to the legislature of the Commonwealth on November 5, 1805, Governor Christopher Greenup stated that

. . . we certainly [have] much cause, as well of self felicitation, as of sincere gratitude to the ruler of the universe that while they [old world countries] are immersed abroad; we are in peace, tranquil and prosperous. . . . 47

Prices for staples were high during 1805 and 1806 and appeared destined to remain so. 48

President Jefferson, although he was not yet prepared to adopt an aggressive course of action against the Spanish in regard to the border dispute in the Southwest, sent a message to Congress on December 3, 1805 which stirred many


47 The Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . 1805 . . ., 11 (Nov. 5, 1805). This source will hereafter be referred to as Journal, Kentucky House with the year of the journal cited. All journals used were published in Frankfort. Greenup's speech was read for him; he was reported to have been too ill to attend. Sentiments similar to Greenup's can be found in The Kentucky Gazette, Sept. 29, 1806.

adventurous souls in Kentucky. Smarting under the insults of the Spanish, many young men in the Bluegrass were willing to resort to force if need be to assert America's rights. 49 Henry Clay believed that a war against the Spanish would not be unpopular and might serve as a deterrent to the powers of Europe, showing that the United States was ready to assert herself if the occasion arose. 50

Although most of the attention of Kentuckians in 1805 and 1806 was on the Spanish problems, the abuses of the British on the high seas were again becoming noticeable, as they had been preceding the Jay Treaty. 51 Breckinridge discouraged war talk in Kentucky and supported Jefferson's commercial coercion to bring the English government to terms. 52 He was further heartened by news of the death of William Pitt whom he saw as the great barrier to accord


51 Harrison, Breckinridge, 195.

52 John Breckinridge to Henry Clay, March 19, 1806, Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, I, 228. A non-importation law was passed in April, 1806, but did not go into effect until December, 1807, following the Chesapeake-Leopard affair. A full discussion of this act can be found in Herbert Heaton, "Non-Importation, 1806-1812," Journal of Economic History. I (November 1941), 178-98.
between the United States and Britain. Although an agreement did not materialize in 1806, most Americans, Kentuckians included, mistakenly believed that such a settlement was near.

Shortly, after the furor over a possible Spanish war subsided, Kentuckians were subjected to renewed rumors concerning the Spanish intrigues of the 1790's, when many prominent Kentuckians were accused of conspiring with the officials at New Orleans. As early as January 10, 1806, United States District Attorney Joseph Hamilton Daviess had warned Jefferson of a new conspiracy in the western country concerning the recently purchased Louisiana territory. With the coming of fall the Frankfort Western World, under the influence of Federalist Humphrey Marshall, former Senator from Kentucky, joined with Daviess in a violent attack upon former Vice-President Aaron Burr as the leader of the latter conspiracy.

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53 John Breckinridge to Henry Clay, March 22, 1806, Clay Papers, I, 228.
54 A treaty negotiated by Monroe and William Pinckney was rejected by Jefferson because of its failure to deal effectively with the problem of impressment. Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (New York, 1965), 146-47.
55 Harrison, Breckinridge, 197.
57 Ibid., 92-94.
Burr was betrayed by fellow conspirator General James Wilkinson, the arch intriguer of the West, and tried in a federal court presided over by Chief Justice John Marshall. Much to the displeasure of Jefferson, Burr's case was dismissed for lack of evidence.  

Through the fall and winter of 1806-1807, these events captured the attention of most Kentuckians, outshining the various orders and decrees of the European powers. As spring turned to summer on the western waters, Kentuckians were still discussing Burr's treason and the possible guilt of his accused Kentucky accomplices. When the Burr trial began in August, 1807, Kentuckians turned their primary attention to that affair, an event which temporarily outshone the problems arising from the Chesapeake affair. In Kentucky, the tyranny of England and France were of less importance than the exciting Burr Conspiracy. Throughout the first three years of renewed European war, Kentuckians had been concerned to some extent with foreign affairs, but the struggle between France and England had taken a secondary importance behind the more immediate problems with Spain. Occupying far more time

58 Ibid., 246-49.

59 Interest was so great in the state that The Kentucky Gazette reprinted a full account of the trial running from September through December, 1807, relegating the Anglo-American problems to a lesser position.
were purely domestic concerns, the growing prosperity of the Ohio Valley, and in late 1806 the news of the Burr Conspiracy. All this would change very quickly in 1807, but until that time most citizens of Kentucky concurred with Governor Greenup that

Happy with us, the lapse of a year is marked only by the roll of seasons, and the resulting avocation of man—Instead of mingling condolence in the ravages of war, or deploring the convulsions of intrigue or faction, we have to falicitate ourselves, and we ought to feel a gratitude to the ruler of events, that the government of America has yet been permitted to escape the worse of evils—that she enjoys peace, and that all is tranquil. . . .

Events of 1807 would threaten this tranquility and plunge the United States to the brink of war with Great Britain.

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60 Journal, Kentucky House, 1806, 16 (Nov. 5, 1806).
CHAPTER II

THE CHESAPEAKE AFFAIR AND THE EMBARGO

While Kentuckians had been preoccupied in 1805 and 1806 with local and sectional problems, the coastal states were confronted with an issue which arose from Great Britain's need for seamen. England had been forced to resort to the impressment of her citizens to fill the crews of the fleets protecting her coasts because conditions aboard her navy were so harsh that few Englishmen volunteered for service. Press gangs roamed the port cities of England and searched neutral merchant ships to procure Englishmen to man her war ships. One of the leading havens for Englishmen hoping to escape the Royal Navy was the greatly enlarged American merchant marine, which was in need of men. Since the Americans were making large profits and were undercrewed, the wages on American ships were quite high, which served as added inducement to English sailors to desert their British employers. During the period between 1803 and 1812, an estimated 20,000 sailors

1 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 111; Bemis, Diplomatic History, 114.

2 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 112-13; Bemis, Diplomatic History, 144.
left His Majesty's service to seek refuge on American
ships. 3

In order to secure the return of these deserters, the
British navy abused its rights as a belligerent to stop and
search neutral shipping. Patrolling just outside American
waters and using American ports to refit and resupply, the
British began seizing sailors aboard American merchant
ships to fill vacancies on their war ships. Any hint of
British origin was justification to the British to return a
"deserter" to the service of the "country of his birth." A
cockney accent or any other characteristic of English birth
was the usual criteria for judgment, but in times of
emergency, or when there were no obvious British types
aboard, the criteria were relaxed. 4 Many native Americans
were taken from their ships and forced to serve aboard
British war ships opposing the French. An estimated 90% of
the 10,000 men impressed from American vessels in the decade
between 1803 and 1812 were United States citizens. 5

To make matters more complicated and less just, the
British placed the burden of proof to gain the release of
the illegally impressed seamen upon the United States
government, a procedure which required months or even years

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3Bemis, Diplomatic History, 145.
4Bailey, Diplomatic History, 112.
5Bernard Mayo, Henry Clay: Spokesman of the New West
(Cambridge, 1937), 281.
to complete. To eliminate the chance of the British mistaking an American citizen for British, the American government issued papers to native-born seamen, assuring all concerned that the bearer was a citizen of the United States. This however was scoffed at by the British and completely disregarded. American sailors were eager to sell these protection papers to their British shipmates, and the papers became all but meaningless since nearly all deserters could raise the $10 purchase price usually asked by American sailors for the documents. Since the United States was a country of immigrants, it held that naturalization was legal. On the contrary, the British contended that British nationality could never be given up; "Once an Englishman, always an Englishman" was the phrase that summed up their position. The concept that a Britisher could avoid service to his country by changing his nationality was completely rejected by the English. The failure by either side to compromise with the other on this issue led to increased friction between the two countries.

The practice of reclaiming "deserters" by impressment was triply inconvenient to the Americans, even when the impressed sailor was a British subject. When the need for

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6 Bailey, *Diplomatic History*, 111; Bemis, *Diplomatic History*, 145.

7 Bemis, *Diplomatic History*, 145.

8 Ibid., 144; Bailey, *Diplomatic History*, 113.
sailors was great. British impressments often left American ships undercrewed, which led in several cases to the sinking of those ships. Secondly, the searching of a ship would require such a long period of time that the affected ship might miss winds or markets, and consequently lose much of the value of her cargo. Finally, the practice of impressment placed a great hardship upon the families of those taken. Often wives and children, mothers and fathers, would be left destitute when a sailor was impressed, a situation which created much ill-will among the people of New England and the middle states.

Clearly, impressment was an insult to the American nation which seemed unable to protect the crews sailing under her flag. To the Americans, the merchant marine was an extension of American territory and any attempt to impress a man from an American ship was viewed as being equivalent to kidnapping a citizen from the streets of Boston, Norfolk or Frankfort, Kentucky. Clearly, this illegal practice had to be discontinued, and from 1804 to 1807 the Jefferson administration made several attempts to alleviate the problem, but with a total lack of success.

Despite the burning anger of the Eastern states, the problem of impressment before 1807 was of little concern to the citizens of Kentucky. Citizens of the Bluegrass were

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9 Bailey, *Diplomatic History*, 111.
too occupied with Spanish problems, prosperity and the Burr Conspiracy to give much attention to the abuses of Great Britain.10 This changed in 1807, and the Kentuckians would then lead the advocates of war who were determined to halt England's high-handed actions upon the open seas. The incident that brought about this change in attitude was the Chesapeake-Leopard affair.

In February 1807, several crewmen escaped from a British squadron lying off the Virginia coast, and four of the escapees signed for duty aboard the American naval frigate, the Chesapeake. When word of this action reached British Vice-Admiral G. C. Berkeley at Halifax, he became enraged and ordered that the men be captured and returned to their rightful fleet.11 Such action was strictly Berkeley's, as the British government, although it supported impressment, did not advocate the right to search neutral war ships.

On June 22, 1807, the Chesapeake, commanded by Commodore James Barron, left Chesapeake Bay bound for Mediterranean duty. Ten miles off the Virginia coast, the

10 Kentucky barely noticed the "Murder of Pierce" when a stray shot from the British frigate Leander killed the mate of an American vessel off New York. Reaction in the coastal areas was intense, but in Kentucky the affair was not cause for protest.

11 Order of G. C. Berkeley, June 1, 1807, reprinted in Americanization Department, Veterans of Foreign Wars, America; Great Crises in Our History Told by Its Makers (12 vols., Chicago, 1925), V, 78-79.
Chesapeake was hailed by the British frigate Leopard, which signalled that it desired to exchange correspondence. Barron thought that the Leopard wished the American frigate to carry dispatches to England and therefore allowed the British warship to approach without ordering the crew from their quarters or preparing the ship for battle. Such preparations would have been difficult since the decks of the Chesapeake were cluttered with gear to be stored away on the long voyage to the Mediterranean.\(^{12}\) The Chesapeake was in no position to resist any attack directed against her.

Drawing near, the British commander presented Admiral Berkeley's order and asked permission to muster the men of the Chesapeake to search for British deserters.\(^{13}\) Amazed, Commodore Barron quite properly refused,\(^{14}\) whereupon the British fired three broadsides into the defenseless frigate, killing three Americans and wounding eighteen.\(^{15}\) Barron had a live coal brought from the ship's galley and

\(^{12}\)Commodore James Barron to Robert Smith [June 1, 1807], ibid., 81-82. Smith was Secretary of the Navy at the time.

\(^{13}\)The Captain of HMS Leopard [S. P. Humphreys] to the Commander of the USS Chesapeake [Barron], [June 22, 1807], ibid., 84.

\(^{14}\)Barron to the Commander of the Leopard [Humphreys], [June 22, 1807], ibid.

\(^{15}\)As reported in the Frankfort Palladium of July, 1807, seven or eight men were killed and several others wounded. McElroy, Kentucky in Nation's History, 315.
one gun was fired.\textsuperscript{16} After this token shot, Barron struck his colors and allowed the British to board his devastated ship.\textsuperscript{17} The crew was mustered, and four British "deserters" were taken back to the \textit{Leopard} to be returned to the British fleet. Three of the four men were native Americans who had served in His Majesty's Navy under impressment, but the fourth was without doubt an Englishman and a deserter.\textsuperscript{18} This latter seaman was taken to Halifax, where he was tried, and hanged from the yardarm of his ship, an event which added further to the humiliation of the United States.

When the \textit{Chesapeake} returned to Norfolk, great rage swelled and engulfed the entire country. The citizens of Norfolk rose against the British men-of-war in the harbor, and forced the British officers on shore leave to flee for the safety of their vessels.

In response to this affair, President Jefferson ordered all British warships out of American waters and made American ports off-limits to the Royal Navy. A ship, the \textit{Revenge}, was sent to England with a demand for an end of impressment, and Jefferson summoned a special session of Congress, but carefully set the date far enough in advance

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Robert H. Ferrell, \textit{American Diplomacy} (New York, 1969), 141.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Barron to the Commander of the \textit{Leopard} [Humphreys], [June 22, 1807], \textit{America; Great Crises}, V, 85.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Mayo, \textit{Henry Clay}, 313.
\end{itemize}
to allow the popular passions to cool. Jefferson hoped to use the *Chesapeake* affair as a wedge to gain the end of impressment from the British.\(^{19}\)

The *Chesapeake* outrage was annoying in Kentucky, coming as it did following a period of high expectation of a United States-Great Britain accord. Kentuckians were greatly indignant.\(^{20}\) Across the state Kentuckians flocked to the population centers where they protested the gross injustice committed by the British. The anti-English bias which had smoldered since the Revolution was finally brought to a flame by the outrageous attack upon the *Chesapeake*.\(^{21}\) Kentuckians saw the tyranny of England

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\(^{20}\) E. Merton Coulter, "Prologue" to G. Glenn Clift, *Remember the Raisin!* Kentucky and Kentuckians in the Battles and Massacre at Frenchtown, Michigan Territory, in War of 1812 (Frankfort, 1961), 1. Henry Clay, serving in the Senate, reported in an open letter in February 1807, that the problems with Great Britain were not as great as feared at the beginning of the session. Clay to \________, February 1, 1807, Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., *Clay Papers*, III, 275. Clay commented several times on the Monroe-Pinckney negotiations which were expected to relieve the problems between the United States and England. Jefferson refused to submit the treaty because of its failure to end impressment, Clay to \________, March 10, 1807, *ibid.*, 288.

entering another phase. No longer content merely to insult the United States, England was now attempting to use force to inflict further humiliation upon the American people.

At Frankfort, a meeting of the citizens of Franklin County elected Governor Christopher Greenup chairman of the meeting and proceeded to draft a series of resolutions denouncing the actions of the British frigate. The resolutions fell short of calling for a declaration of war against the British, but the wording could hardly be classified as being passive. After reviewing the dastardly crime committed by the British, the meeting resolved that

. . . we have viewed with grief as well as indignation, for some years past a propensity on the part of Great Britain to infringe our national rights.

2d Resolved, nem. con. That in disclaiming all intention of dictating to our government, we consider the late unprecedented attack of the British ship Leopard, on the United States' ship Chesapeake, as having filled the measure of national insult and injury.

3d, Resolved, nem. con. That in expressing our full and entire confidence in the present executive; we rely firmly, on such measures being taken as will in the future secure our independence and enforce respect from all European nations.

4th, Resolved, nem. con. That we will support the constituted authorities of our country in the measures they shall, in their wisdom deem proper to take, in vindication of our national honor, with our lives and our fortunes.

5th, Resolved, nem. con. As our opinion and firm hope, that if we are to lose our independence; it shall be lost with swords in our hands.

6th, Resolved, nem. con. That it is the duty of all who claim or aspire to the high and
dignified station of free men, to preserve their national rights, or to die in the last ditch in defense of them.

7th, Resolved, nem. con. That we strongly sympathise in the sentiments expressed, and the prompt and patriotic measures adopted by the citizens of Norfolk (Virginia) and its vicinity on this trying emergency; following from a laudable indignation at the atrocious outrage committed on our flag; and dictated by a disinterested regard for the honor and independence of our common country.

8th, Resolved, nem. con. That this meeting do approve of their spirit of opposition to the acts of violence and hostility committed on American citizens and the flag of the United States by British subjects, manifested in the meetings of our Atlantic brethren—and also the determination of our government shall be known.

The resolutions were then sent to the President and the governors of the various states in the union. To Robert B. McAfee, who attended the meeting at Frankfort, war seemed inevitable. McAfee stated that the people of Franklin County were fully united in hatred of Britain. The call was for vengeance, and all joined in the call for governmental action. Such meetings were held all across the state as Kentuckians combined to denounce the attack upon the warship. Resolutions were passed at these meetings

22 At a meeting of the citizens of Franklin at the State House in Frankfort, on the 24th of July, 1807, for the purpose of taking into consideration the depredations, insults, and outrages committed by British subjects . . . (n.p., n.d.).

urging the general government to take effective action to restore American rights on the high seas.

Jefferson, however, was not to be pressured into war at this time. He realized how unprepared the United States was, and he knew that a war would be disastrous for the country. Pledged to reduce the national debt, Jefferson saw war as a step toward that worst of all possible evils, a standing army and navy. Jefferson, after calling for a volunteer army, proceeded in his attempt to secure a peaceful settlement with the British.

In August 1807, McAfee received news that his militia company had to make its quota to "fight the British who sometimes sense [sic] make an attack on one of our vessels near Norfolk [sic], Virginia." At the regimental muster at Harrodsburg, at which Colonels Gabriel Slaughter and Richard M. Johnson spoke, McAfee reported that he "scarcely ever saw so much ardor prevail amongst men. Liberty and a determination to support the honor of our government prevailed the minds of all..."

In the summer of 1807, most Kentuckians were convinced

24 McElroy, Kentucky Nation's History, 317.
25 Kentucky's share of the volunteer army was 5,212 men, ibid.
26 McAfee, Journal, 1803-1807, 55.
27 Ibid., 60-61.
that war with Great Britain was a certainty. Newspapers in the state carried reports of the failure of the negotiations between the United States and England and declared that armed action was the only course left open to the Americans. The United States was being ridiculed in the English papers and a satisfactory agreement was not expected. War preparations in England and particularly Canada were discussed, and the belief by the British that war was inevitable was recounted in the public press. 28

Furthermore, in November 1807, instead of easing restrictions following the Chesapeake affair, barriers were strengthened. 29

The Chesapeake-Leopard affair was quickly followed by the bombardment of neutral Copenhagen, Denmark by a British fleet. It seemed that neutrality was quickly becoming impossible. In a story entitled "No Neutrals--But Allies or Foes" the Kentucky Gazette of October 27, 1807 reprinted Francis James "Copenhagen" Jackson's ultimatum to the Danish court. Jackson, the British minister to Denmark, stated that

... it is impossible any longer to distinguish between a neutral and an enemy. That the ordinary covenants (that is, treaties and the law of nations) of any neutral nation are not to stand in the way of British policy or interest.

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28 Kentucky Gazette, Oct. 20, 1807.

29 Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen, Nov. 17, 1808.
The implication that neutrals could exist only under the protection of England led the Kentucky Gazette to inquire if the American people were prepared to place themselves in the benevolent hands of the British. This paper asserted that the only courses remaining to the United States were to submit to British domination or to fight for independence as she had done barely thirty years previously.\(^{30}\) The prospects of a peaceful settlement of differences between the United States and England seemed bleak.\(^{31}\)

Impressment, ship seizures and the Chesapeake outrage provoked hostility against the British in the West; however, the greatest hostility was produced by the belief held by most Kentuckians that the British were actively aiding the Indians in the Northwest territory. This was considered to be the one unpardonable crime in the eyes of the westerners.\(^{32}\)

In the Northwest territory, the Indians were reported to be in a state of unrest in the summer of 1807. A general Indian conspiracy was reported to be forming in that

\(^{30}\)Kentucky Gazette, Oct. 27, 1807.

\(^{31}\)Ibid.; ibid., Nov. 10, Dec. 22, 1807.

\(^{32}\)This was reported to be a false charge by Ernest Alexander Cruishank, "The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812," Annual Report of the American Historical Society for the Year 1895 (Washington, 1896), 321-22.
section with the avowed purpose of invading Kentucky to massacre the citizens of the state. After this invasion and massacre, the Indians planned, so the report ran, to live in the houses of the Kentuckians and eat their cattle. Stories from Detroit reported that the Indians had massacred several people in that area. There was a general appeal to the Kentuckians for assistance since the Indians were said to be afraid of the Kentucky militia.

A correspondent to the Kentucky Gazette reported a belief, held by most Kentuckians, that the British were acting to push the Indians into violence against the Kentuckians and other westerners. Stating that Fort Malden, a British fort on the Canadian shore of the Detroit River, was the source of supply for the savages, the westerners associated, perhaps not incorrectly, the increased Indian activity with the events in the coastal waters. There seemed no end to the British depredations upon American rights. The only alternative to national humiliation, it seemed, was the use of force to counter the violence used by the haughty British government.

Further insults were reported in the Kentucky Gazette

33 Kentucky Gazette, Sept. 8, 1807.
34 Ibid., Sept. 22, 1807.
36 Ibid., Sept. 22, 1807.
before the meeting of the General Assembly in December 1807. The execution of one of the impressed crewmen of the Chesapeake by the British was noted, with the speculation that the other three prisoners would be executed when the British felt the occasion justified such action. Quoting an article from the Boston Chronicle, the Kentucky Gazette stated that "Such an outrage [the hanging of the impressed seaman] has no parallel."37 A second attack upon an American gunboat was reported which further heightened the belligerence of the Kentuckians.38 England was seen as being determined to humiliate the American nation and people. The role of neutral seemed doomed under the tyrannical actions of the British. Hatred of England, smoldering since the Revolution, may have produced an anti-British bias in 1803, but the events of the spring and summer of 1807 brought this smoldering to a blaze. The early hatred may have been strong, but the Chesapeake affair produced the first widespread talk of war against the British in Kentucky.

War fever had subsided only slightly by the time of the annual meeting of the General Assembly of Kentucky in December 1807. By December 30, 1807, the day of Governor Christopher Greenup's annual speech to the combined houses

37 Ibid., Oct. 6, 1807.
38 Ibid., Sept. 29, 1807.
of the legislature, the Indian trouble in the Northwest had subsided, lessening somewhat the belligerence of the Kentuckians. Although Greenup was able to present a prosperous picture of Kentucky's domestic economy and a peaceful account of the relationship between the westerners and the Indians, he worried that foreign affairs were still far from settled.

Our commerce continues to be harrassed by several of the belligerent powers, our rights infringed and the flag of the United States has been insulted in a most extraordinary manner, by a foreign power, who has never ceased to manifest her hostility toward us, since by the valor and firmness of the American people their dominion was shaken off and their schemes of subjegation and oppression were defeated.

Although Greenup said that the affair was the business of the general government, he proposed that the General Assembly adopt a resolution expressing the sentiment of the people of Kentucky concerning the foreign relations of the United States. He further asked that the General Assembly pledge to co-operate with the actions of the President and the government in Washington.39 This clearly was not the call for belligerent action demanded by the resolutions passed in the mass meetings during the hot summer days of 1807. The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth responded with moderation, and stated in its reply to Greenup on January 6, 1808 that

39Journal, Kentucky House, 1807, 10 (Dec. 30, 1807).
We the House of Representatives cannot repress our indignation, when contemplating the acts of perfidy and murder of the British navy, and with one voice express a wish that the general government may adopt prompt and effective measures to support the insulted and degraded majesty of the American nation, and convince her lordly enemies that her rights shall not be invaded nor her dignity insulted with impunity.

... we are willing not only to express the public sentiment, but also to pledge our honor, our blood and treasure in support of such measures as may be adopted by the general government, to secure and protect the peace, dignity, and independence of the union against foreign invasion, and to chastise and bring to a state of reason our haughty and imperious foes.40

This was strong language indeed, but hardly a cry for war by a harried and frustrated victim. Instead, just as in 1803 with the Spanish problems, the Kentuckians, as good Republicans, were willing to place the entire burden of decision in the hands of Jefferson. Although war would be welcomed by the Kentuckians, the general attitude was to wait until the Jefferson administration could set a course of action. The citizens of the Bluegrass state did not want to force the President into a course that he did not wish to take. The westerners were indignant, but they were still Republicans and disciples of Jefferson, and as such they waited for the government in Washington to provide direction for their actions.

Jefferson's plan for retaliation had been decided and put into action at the special session of Congress called

40 Ibid., 32-33 (Jan. 6, 1808).
late in 1807. On October 27, 1807, Jefferson outlined his program on foreign relations in a message to Congress, and Congress, on December 22, 1807, following the failure of negotiations, complied with the wishes of the President by passing an embargo bill which forbade all American merchant ships from engaging in international commerce. On December 27, 1807, Jefferson authorized enforcement of the non-importation action passed in April 1806 which restricted the flow of British products into the United States. Jefferson was committed to a program of maintaining a balanced budget and retiring the national debt, and he feared that war would delay the achievement of these goals. War might even lead to the establishment of standing armies and navies which would forever end governmental austerity and endanger personal freedom. This, and the realization that the United States was not prepared to contest the British Empire in an open military conflict, led Jefferson to a different approach to the problem.

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41Reprinted in the Nov. 10, 1807 issue of the Kentucky Gazette. It can be assumed that the Governor and the members of the General Assembly would know the direction taken by the President before the opening of the legislative session in December. The Jefferson speech can be found in A. E. Burgh and A. A. Lipscomb, eds., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (20 vols., Washington, 1903), III, 444-53.

42Burgh and Lipscomb, eds., Writings of Jefferson, III, 455-56.

43A complete discussion of the Non-importation Act can be found in Heaton, "Non-Importation, 1806-1812," 178-98.
Using the idea employed by the British North American colonies in 1765, 1767 and 1775, Jefferson decided to attack the belligerents where it would hurt them most, in the pocketbook. He proposed that the United States ban the importation of goods from warring powers, and, by confining the American merchant marine to their ports, eliminate herself from the carrying trade, thus preventing the British industries from obtaining the raw materials necessary for their operations. The Embargo, a tool of commercial coercion, would force the belligerent powers to respect American rights and commerce.

Although the Kentuckians were still willing to fight if need be to secure their rights and to revenge the injustice of the Chesapeake affair, they consented to give the Embargo a chance to succeed. In reply to Greenup's speech, the General Assembly began drawing up resolutions on foreign affairs to convey the attitude of Kentuckians to the general government. The first resolution proposed in the House of Representatives was far more belligerent than that body wished to transmit to Washington. It stated that since the United States was on the brink of war "with a nation that has repeatedly insulted the American flag," the general government in Washington must know the will of the people. Stating that

... the people of Kentucky view with abhorrence and detestation the unparalleled and inhuman attacks on our neutral rights; and as an
honorable adjustment of differences have not; nor is not expected to take place; they are not only ready to step forth at their country's call, but are determined to risque their lives and property in her defence, and if her liberty must expire they will expire with it.44

Although this resolution might have expressed the sentiment of the people of the Commonwealth, it was certainly counter to the Jeffersonian program of non-violent commercial coercion. Because of the inflammatory language of the resolution, the proposal was quickly replaced by another, more moderate measure.

On January 15, 1808, another resolution stated that

. . . they the Senate and House of Representatives of the state consider the conduct of Great Britain in many instances, but more particularly in the attack upon the Chesapeake, as outrageous and insulting in the extreme; and such as in the event of a failure on her part to make honorable reparation, calls for the severest chastisement.

Resolved, That whatever measures for vindicating the national honor, the wisdom of the government may prescribe, shall receive the support of our best exertions, and the devotion of our lives and fortunes.45

This second resolution was clearly a blank check which left the prerogative for action in the hands of the President.

The State Senate, however, showed that violent action was not completely ruled out. In a resolution presented in January 1808, the upper house of the General Assembly resolved that

44Journal, Kentucky House, 1807, 51 (Jan. 12, 1808).
The measure pursued by the federal executive to vindicate our rights without an appeal to arms, has not been ascertained. Therefore, Resolved, That although in the opinion of the legislature the interest and prosperity of the United States will (if peace can be maintained with dignity and honor) be more effectually promoted by pursuing a pacific policy, yet it becomes the representatives of the people of Kentucky, early to provide the means of resisting the outrages, and punishing the encroachments of any foreign power.

The Senate then proposed that the state militia be prepared to defend their country by becoming more effectually armed and disciplined. Although the Senate was willing to give the President a chance to preserve the rights and freedoms of the American nation through pacific measures, it carefully provided for the eventual use of force should the noble effort fail. Kentuckians were willing to follow the President's program, but they still did not rule out offensive action against the British government.

Finally, before the legislature adjourned in February, 1808, a law was passed which forbade the use in Kentucky of English legal precedents in cases argued before state courts. As proposed, the law would have excluded all precedents in English common law. In order to preserve what Henry Clay thought was a great system of law, young Clay convinced the legislature to exclude only those precedents decided after July 4, 1776 from use in Kentucky.

46Ibid., 71 (Jan. 18, 1808).
Although the measure was not a killing blow to Great Britain, it did show the anti-British feeling in the state. The Kentuckians could not attack British territory, so they were forced to look for targets they could reach. With the passage of this law the General Assembly adjourned for another year, and agreed to support Jefferson in his handling of the affair in whatever method he felt necessary. 48

The General Assembly had accepted the Embargo, a development that was repeated across the state. This fact was indicated at a public dinner in Lexington, given for newly appointed governor of Upper Louisiana, Meriwether Lewis, early in 1808. Following toasts to the United States, the Union and the Constitution, came toasts to the Ocean ("Free as the air we breathe--the nation who arrogates dominion over it, should be treated as a pirate"), The Embargo ("Its operation will prove the wisdom in which it originated"), National Dignity ("preferable to the merchandize of Europe--or of the world") and Home Manufactures ("They will ultimately afford us an idemnity


48 This measure was similar in effect to the public renaming of German Shepherd dogs during World War I. It did not have any effect upon the enemy but it did make the people feel better.
for the losses of war"). That these toasts were all
offered before the toast to retiring President Jefferson
indicated the importance of the issue in Kentucky. 49 In
the West, many looked upon Jefferson very highly; anything
that could relegate him to a lesser position was important
indeed.

Thus early in 1808 the people of Kentucky generally
settled down to allow the commercial coercion to force the
British to respect American rights. However, the relative
calm would not improve the Kentuckians' attitude toward the
British, as diplomatic insults and threats as well as
domestic economic depression would combine to increase
malevolence toward the British in the West.

49 Kentucky Gazette, Jan. 26, 1808.
CHAPTER III

DEPRESSION IN THE WEST AND DIPLOMATIC INSULTS

Throughout 1808 most Kentuckians remained consistent in their support of Jefferson's Embargo, even though the West experienced an economic depression which prostrated commercial agriculture in the region. Following the peak year of 1805, produce prices at New Orleans fell over 20% by 1808, a drastic blow to the frontier farmer who had borrowed money to expand when the future was promising and was then forced to repay the loans when money constricted. Prices had risen due to the optimism following the purchase of Louisiana, and they remained high throughout 1805. They declined only slightly in 1806 and 1807, but 1808 was a true depression year. From 1808 until the War of 1812, prices remained disastrously low in the West. Although they rose slightly from October 1809 through February 1811, they declined to a ruinously low level until war was declared in April 1812. Despite the slight recovery in 1809-1811, prices still remained 11-15% below the peak year.

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of 1805, and were a constant cause for worry in the Western country.  

To make the situation even worse, the Western farmers were forced to pay relatively higher prices for the goods that they bought through New Orleans. Prices for produce and imported goods were close to parity in 1805, but by 1808, although import prices had fallen over 10%, produce prices had fallen over 20%. Furthermore, when produce prices were recovering slightly to 11-15% lower than 1805 prices, the prices of imports rose almost to equity with the 1805 import prices. Thus the farmer in the West had to accept lower prices for his goods when he sold them and at the same time had to pay basically the same prices for the goods that he bought. This was the reason for much of the discontent in the West in the years preceding the War of 1812.

To the frontier Republican farmer the reasons for this depression were obvious; the British and French commercial decrees and orders against neutral shipping had forced the United States from foreign markets and created an excess of produce which drove prices to their low levels. The Federalists, on the other hand, saw the origins of the depression in the Embargo passed by the Republicans and

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2 Taylor, "Prices Mississippi Valley," 149. See chart 1, Appendix I.

3 Ibid., 161. See chart 2, Appendix I.
urged that if American ships were allowed to trade with the belligerents, then the excess produce could be sold, and prosperity would be restored to the nation, which would allow both farmer and shipper to make a profit. 4

George R. Taylor in his study of the depression in the West during the pre-war years concludes that the depression would have occurred had there been no Embargo or European orders and decrees. 5 He states that the West had several problems dealing with transportation, communication and finance to solve before lasting prosperity could be achieved in the region. None of these problems individually would have been disastrous, but together they combined to form a barrier to Western prosperity. 6 The bubble of 1805 was largely due to increased speculation and emigration following the purchase of Louisiana, and, without a solid basis for prosperity, the bubble was bound to burst. 7 The year 1808 marked the collapse of the artificially high prices and brought in economic decline. When the depression occurred, all Western enterprises, with the exception of the hemp producers and manufacturers

6 Ibid., 474-84.
7 Ibid., 471-72.
around Lexington, were drastically hurt. This economic crisis would continue until the war began and would be a constant reminder of the greed and the cupidity of the British government and people who were seen as the agents creating the depression by the western farmers.

The westerners, however, failed to see the depression as the result of normal economic occurrences. Furthermore, they refused to believe the Federalist charge that the Embargo was solely responsible for their plight. The real culprits in the eyes of the Kentuckians were the British and the French and their commercial restrictions of 1806 and 1807.

After the battle of Trafalgar on October 21, 1805, the French fleet was effectively removed as an offensive threat to the English. Napoleon realized that without a fleet he could not hope to invade England, and he looked for other means of conquering the "nation of shopkeepers." The method he arrived at was an economic policy which attempted to prostrate the industrial and commercial basis upon which England depended. Napoleon's plan was to close European markets to the products of English workmen, thus leading to unemployment, poverty and finally complete economic ruin of

8 Ibid., 485.
9 Ibid., 490; Reginald Horsman, "Western War Aims," 6.
10 Bailey, Diplomatic History, 114.
the British Empire. The first decree of the French dictator outlined his Continental System, closed all European ports under his command to British goods and shipping, and barred them to neutral shipping that had called upon a British port before landing in continental Europe. The Berlin Decree was expanded by the Milan Decree of December 17, 1807. 11

In retaliation to the Berlin Decree, the British government issued a series of Orders-in-Council which it hoped would weaken Napoleon. The British program included restricting contraband goods shipped in neutral bottoms, the raising of revenue to aid England in her war effort on the continent, and finally eliminating neutral commerce to the European powers and replacing neutrals with British merchants for British profit. This program was outlined in the Order-in-Council of January 7, 1807 and strengthened by the Order of November 11, 1807. 12

Each belligerent, in trying to weaken the power of its rival, attacked neutral shipping. Neutrals were thus caught between the power of both countries. Harassed by the might of the British navy on the open seas and by the French dictator through his control of the continental ports, American shipping, as well as that of other neutrals, was placed in a precarious position.

12Bemis, Diplomatic History, 149.
To Kentuckians, the real villain responsible for the falling prices for produce was the British restrictions upon neutral shipping. The depression was blamed upon the closing of markets to American goods by the struggling powers. American neutrality no longer served as a shield to protect American trade with both warring camps of Europe. Because of European distress, American commerce had grown, but in 1807-1808 this growth seemed threatened by the tyranny of the belligerents. The solution to the problem was the removal of European trade restrictions placed upon neutral shipping.

Thus during 1808 Kentuckians had a year of depression to ponder until the re-opening of the General Assembly in December. Anti-British articles appearing in Kentucky newspapers denounced the British government for instigating the renewed European conflict in order to dominate all of Europe and to suppress the French Revolution. Reveling in British misfortune, the Kentuckians vented their hatred upon the foe they felt was grasping greedily for control of the world. Although accommodation with Great Britain was not expected, accord with France seemed possible, a prospect that was well received by the Kentucky press.

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13 Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen, November 17, 1808; McAfee, War in the Western Country, 7.
14 Paris Western Citizen, November 17, 1808.
15 Ibid.
Although most people were in favor of the Embargo, a small minority, mostly Federalists, was in opposition. Led by Humphrey Marshall, a Federalist and cousin and brother-in-law of the Chief Justice, and Matthew Lyon, a Republican and former New Englander sitting in the United States Congress from a western Kentucky district, opposition to the President's commercial coercion received criticism upon the grounds that it was destroying what it was attempting to protect. Marshall, rabidly anti-Jefferson, based his opposition upon the contention that the Embargo was injurious to American shipping while France and England were unaffected. Matthew Lyon realized that America was not yet prepared for war with England. Furthermore he agreed with Marshall that the Embargo was not an effective way to coerce the British. He realized that although the American people should, theoretically, have freedom of the seas, this could not be as long as the United States remained weak militarily. Apart from these few dissenters, the great majority of the people supported the Embargo and Jefferson's commercial coercion. Accord with England was not expected and the Embargo seemed the best alternative available.

16 Van Dusen, Henry Clay, 52.

17 Lyda Peek Smith, "Matthew Lyon in Kentucky" (masters thesis, Western Kentucky University, 1932), 82-83.

18 Bardstown (Ky.) Candid Review, March 22, 1808.
The Embargo was supported by most Kentuckians, despite the fact that it was counter to their first reaction to the British outrage, for four very important reasons. First, it was proposed and supported by Jefferson, who was revered in the western country. Second, it did provide a method of resisting European aggressions and maintaining American honor without taking arms against the might of the British Empire, a measure which many realized would be disastrous militarily and economically. Third, they supported the Embargo as a tool to open European markets closed by the various decrees and orders. Fourth, within a few years Kentuckians realized that the Embargo protected them from foreign manufactured goods, which led to the development of manufacturing in the West, particularly around Lexington.


20 This was hinted at in a letter from James Taylor, a prominent northern Kentuckian, to his distant cousin, James Madison, November 29, 1808, in James A. Padgett, ed., "Letters of James Taylor to the Presidents of the United States," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, XXXIV (July 1936), 251. A clearer statement can be found in Clay's resolution before the Kentucky House of Representatives. See Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, III, 388-89; Acts Passed at the First Session of the Seventeenth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky begun . . . 12th. day of December, 1808 . . . (Frankfort, 1809), 131. The latter source will be hereafter referred to as Acts. See also Mayo, Henry Clay, 54.

Manufacturing was seen early as a profitable enterprise for the Kentuckians and many newspaper articles urged the state to expand manufacturing. 22

In December 1808, Governor Charles Scott made his initial speech to the state legislature. He urged military preparedness, in event of possible war with the belligerents, and the promotion of home manufactures to make America independent of Europe. Scott denounced equally the French and the British in his statement. 23 In their reply to Scott's address, the Representatives agreed that the outrages had been committed by both England and France and that "resistance, in some form, is obviously the painful duty alone left to the general government." Whatever course the nation followed, embargo or war, they pledged

22 Coulter, "Prologue," Clift, Remember the Raisin, 1. Lexington was rapidly becoming an industrial town, and by 1811, a British traveller reported that most all the buildings of the city were of brick and the streets were nearly all paved. He stated that the primary manufactures of the town consisted of thirteen rope-walks, five bagging factories, eight cotton factories, three woolen factories, one factory producing duck cloth and one producing oil cloth. Besides these organized factories, he also reported three dozen skilled trades carried on in the city, with artisans ranging from smiths to watch-makers. Lexington was the hotbed of protectionism in the state. To these protectionists, the only barrier better than a tariff was an embargo and non-intercourse with the European powers. Thus the Eastern states would be forced to buy from the rapidly growing industrialized western country. John Melish, Travels Through the United States of North America in the Years 1806 and 1807 and 1809, 1810, and 1811 (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1812), II, 184-89.

that Kentuckians would support the endeavor "with patriotism." The Embargo, although it may have produced some economic distress in the country, was less an evil than war and might "produce a sense of justice in the belligerents." The House of Representatives was willing to support the Embargo as an alternative to war, but it was ready to support more violent action if the government in Washington called for it.

The real excitement of the session came later in December, however, when Robert Scroggin, Bourbon County representative in the House of Representatives, presented a resolution concerning the Embargo and the Jefferson administration. Rewriting the resolution, Clay offered his version on December 16, 1808. It commended the Jefferson administration and called the Embargo "a measure highly judicious, and . . . an honorable expedient to avoid war. . . ." Furthermore, it pledged the Kentuckians' "most energetic support" to the general government in its efforts to resist the tyranny of the European belligerents and agreed to support whatever action the national government might take, be it "war, a total non-intercourse, or a more rigid execution of the Embargo system. . . ." Finally, noting the coming retirement of Kentucky's political idol, Thomas Jefferson, the resolution stated that Jefferson was

24 Journal, Kentucky House, 1808, 77-78 (Dec. 29, 1808).
"entitled to the thanks of his country, for the ability, uprightness and intelligence which he has displayed in the management of our foreign relations and domestic concerns." 25

Although the resolution was favored by almost all the members of the House of Representatives, Humphrey Marshall could not allow such a complimentary resolution to pass without comment and presented a resolution to counter Clay's. Marshall resolved that all nations had the right to navigate the open seas, and that war was an evil and should only be entered after pacific actions were taken to preserve the peace. However, for several years past the British and the French had violated the rights of the United States, and after unsuccessfully trying to resolve the problems with the belligerents, the general government passed an Embargo which damaged American commerce more than it hurt the belligerents. He said that the only manly thing for the United States to do was to stop all intercourse with the belligerents and protect American shipping by instituting convoys and arming merchant ships. He further declared that any resort to force by either of the belligerents would be construed as a declaration of war against the United States. Finally, he proposed that the

Commonwealth pledge any support that might be "necessary and proper to protect the rights and citizens, and maintain the honour and independence of the nation."

Although both men called for resistance to European aggressions, Marshall's resolution was anti-Jefferson while Clay's was pro-Jefferson. Furthermore, Marshall would write later that his resolution was "impartial as to France and England, [and] might as readily lead to peace or war with the one as the other. Things utterly repugnant to the first principles of Jeffersonian policy, now devolved on the care and management of President Madison." While this may have been an overstatement, it is indicative of the anti-Republican and anti-Jefferson feelings of Humphrey Marshall and a few Kentuckians.26

When a vote was finally taken, Marshall cast the only vote for his resolution, while Clay's resolution passed with only Marshall's vote in opposition.27 Kentuckians were still willing to follow the program of Jefferson and had not lost their ardor for the leader of their party and country.

In a final attempt to lash out at the British and at the same time encourage domestic manufacturing, the House of Representatives, before adjourning, passed a resolution


27 McElroy, Kentucky in Nation's History, 318-19.
which encouraged the people of the Commonwealth to support products made in the United States and pledged that the members of the General Assembly would wear only clothes made of American produced cloth. Presented by Clay, the resolution drew immediate opposition from Marshall. Following the passage of the resolution, Marshall persisted in wearing clothing of obvious European manufacture, an occurrence which greatly upset the Jeffersonians and led to spirited debate between Marshall and Clay. In the course of the argument, Marshall questioned the truthfulness of some of Clay's statements. This insult led to the Clay-Marshall duel of January 26, 1809 in which three shots were exchanged. Kentuckians were sensitive to personal insults and slights, and the gentlemanly code of conduct prescribed a recourse to arms. Was it surprising then that Kentuckians were anxious to resort to violence to rectify an insult to the national honor?

Kentuckians waited patiently in 1807 and 1808 for the general government to restore America's honor. In these years belligerent alternatives were replaced by commercial

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28 Resolution to Encourage Use of American Manufactures, January 3, 1809, Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, I, 396-97; Acts, 1808, 133-34.

29 Clay's challenge and Marshall's acceptance as well as Clay's report of the incident can be found in Clay to Humphrey Marshall, Jan. 4, 1809, Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, I, 397; Marshall to Clay, Jan. 4, 1809, ibid., 398; and Clay to James Clark, Jan. 19, 1809, ibid., 400-01.
coercion. However, the deepening depression and renewed Indian problems in the following years would alter this course. The call for war originally expressed to revenge national honor following the Chesapeake Affair and other factors contributed to a more complex situation following 1808. Added to the economic hardship, blamed upon the British and the French restrictions, were several diplomatic blunders which were interpreted by the Americans as insults at the hands of the British. The first of these was the so-called Erskine Affair of 1809.

Upon assuming the presidency in 1809, James Madison presented the nation a new method of opposing the British and French commercial restrictions. By the time Madison took office, it had become evident that the Embargo had largely been a failure. In order to coerce the British and French, Madison proposed, in the Non-Intercourse Act which was passed, that American ports and commerce be reopened to all nations except the British and French. This discrimination was to end only when the belligerents agreed to repeal their restrictions upon neutral American commerce. This was definitely a victory for the New England Federalists and the shippers they represented as well as the British, who, unlike the French, could get goods indirectly through second parties. Whatever the weaknesses of the Embargo, even those historians who think that the Embargo possibly could have forced the British and the French to
Although Madison tried a new tactic in coercing the British, his main efforts were channeled toward effecting an agreement through the British Minister to the United States, David M. Erskine. Erskine had told British Foreign Minister George Canning in December 1808 that the United States would equalize the position of the British and French shipping to the United States. By making the Non-Importation Act, which had been applicable to British shipping only, apply to French shipping as well, and by forbidding French war ships from entering American ports it would give England equal rights with France. After the passage of the Non-Intercourse Act the British complaint that they were being discriminated against relative to France would be settled. Furthermore, Congress was in the process of passing a law which would forbid American ships to employ foreign seamen, which would end the problem of impressment. Finally, the United States, according to Albert Gallatin, was willing to abide by the Rule of 1756, in refusing to claim rights to trade with markets that were normally closed to her in time of peace. It appeared that American-British problems were about to be solved to the

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benefit of the British. It was for these reasons that Canning received the news of the passage of the Non-Intercourse Act with great favor.

Erskine, very pro-American, desired to remove the problems that had come between the United States and Britain, and this bias may have been responsible for influencing his dispatches to Canning. Erskine was very anxious to believe the best in regard to the United States attitudes toward the British, and Canning took Erskine's word for the conditions in the United States. 32

Acting upon such favorable information, Canning proposed that the British government was willing to

. . . (1) withdraw her Orders-in-Council of January and November, 1807, in so far as they touched American shipping, and the United States in turn to repeal contemporaneously all non-importation and non-intercourse acts against Great Britain as well as interdiction of its waters to British ships of war; (2) the Non-Intercourse Act to go into effect immediately against France, and to be enforced by the British navy, which should have a right to capture American ships violating it; (3) the United States to accept the Rule of 1756. 33

Erskine was instructed to read this communication directly to the American Secretary of State; instead he began to


33 Bemis, Diplomatic History, 153.
negotiate with Robert Smith, Secretary of State, without letting Smith know exactly what the British Foreign Minister was demanding. It was this disregard of orders that brought about the Erskine Affair and the British government's repudiation of that minister. 34

Immediately after receiving these directions, Erskine and Smith worked out an understanding concerning the Chesapeake Affair. Madison no longer pressed for a court-martial for Admiral Berkeley's actions, and Erskine agreed to restore the men taken from the Chesapeake and to make reparations to those who had been wounded and the families of those killed in the attack. Having taken care of the major barrier to an American-British accord, Erskine then turned to the larger question of impressment.

He approached the President and on April 19, 1809, an agreement was made whereby the British would withdraw the Orders-in-Council as they pertained to the United States as of June 10, 1809 and the Americans would repeal the Non-Intercourse Act. When news of the agreement became public, many were overjoyed. Even the Federalists were glad to find that the Republicans had been able to effect a settlement with the British over the question of neutral rights. New England shippers responded to the good news by sending hundreds of American ships to Europe to take advantage of

34Tansill, "Smith," 159.
the renewed opportunities. Prosperity seemed imminent for the American shippers and producers who had suffered under the hardship of both the Orders-in-Council and the Embargo.

However, Erskine had clearly violated his instructions by not revealing his instructions to the Americans. He led the Americans to believe that all Britain expected of them was the repeal of the economic coercive measures aimed at the British merchants; he did not tell the American negotiators that the British government expected the United States to maintain a belligerent attitude toward Napoleon and the French. Erskine avoided mentioning this requirement because he realized that the United States could not accept such a provision. Because Erskine had both disobeyed and exceeded his instructions, Canning quite correctly repudiated the agreement drawn up by the minister and called for his return to Britain. Coincidentally, the British issued new Orders-in-Council which extended the paper blockage of Europe and increased the British duty upon cotton which, along with the repudiation of the Erskine agreement, caused considerable distress in the United States. After the seizures of the ships sent to the continent by the American merchants, and the receipt of the repudiation of the Erskine agreement, the United States
reluctantly reinstated non-intercourse against the British and the crisis began again. 35

Just as the Federalists had applauded the Erskine agreement, they also denounced the perfidy of the British in rejecting the treaty. Many Westerners came to the defense of the administration when the treaty fell through. 36 In the West, however, there was a different attitude toward the rejected treaty. The Erskine Treaty was viewed with suspicion by the Westerners because it would open up direct trade with the British. 37 The Lexington Reporter commented on May 13, 1809 that the monopoly given the British manufacturers by the Erskine treaty would aid the British and hurt the Americans.

What will be the price of our produce confined and concentrated totally in British warehouses? Where will be our carrying trade? Why, British merchants and British manufacturers will purchase our productions for the mere expense of shipping and the duties and commissions to London and Liverpool merchants! . . . Britain will have gained a most glorious victory. . . .

What is become of the 100,000 hogshead of Tobacco exported from the United States? Will Britain consume and manufacture all our cotton? No, not one tenth of our Tobacco—not one half of our


36 James Taylor to James Madison, August 11, 1809, in James A. Padgett, ed., "Letters of James Taylor to the Presidents of the United States," 257; Taylor to Madison, August 11, 1809, ibid., 260.

cotton; and our flour, our grain, our ashes, our staves and every other property must center there. . . .

To the western farmer, the Erskine agreement meant little more than an opportunity for the British to obtain raw materials for the lowest possible price.

Opposition was also mounted for quite another reason. Many people in the West advocated the encouragement of industry to offset the economic dislocation attributed to the British and French commercial restrictions. The Kentucky Gazette of January 31, 1809 argued that

Never was there so fine an opportunity of establishing (Manufactures) as now—particularly those of cotton. . . . This is a 'golden opportunity,' which I pray may be improved by the industrious enterprise of our citizens and the patriotic guardianship of Congress. But in great undertakings we cannot avoid taking a prospect of the future. Suppose a peace settled between England and America—without 'protecting duties' being laid on the importation of foreign goods—what will be the inexitable consequence? . . . American manufacturers, who have inserted all their money in machinery, materials, etc. will be ruined and overwhelmed by the inundations of British goods. The patriotic adventurer will be sacrificed for his pains.

The editor then suggested that a protective tariff was needed to aid the infant industries of the country and to protect them in case of peace. He then warned, "If we avail ourselves of this lucky conjecture of things,

we may render our country really independant...39
Thus the tensions between the United States and the British
were not viewed by all segments of the society and of the
country as being necessarily harmful.

Echoing this sentiment, Adam Beatty, a member of the
Kentucky legislature, introduced a bill in the Kentucky
House of Representatives that would have placed a bounty on
the raising of marino sheep. He drove home his point by
concluding that "so long as we are obliged to resort to a
foreign nation for a supply of a necessary of life, we
shall in some way be dependant upon that nation."40 The
Lexington Reporter, in a dire warning of the damage done to
American farmers by the Erskine agreement, noted that "Our
manufacturers will be annihilated," by the renewed importa-
tion of British manufactures. Thus, although many
Westerners supported the Erskine agreement, there were
others who failed to see advantages for themselves and/or
their section in such a treaty.41

This did not lessen the insult felt by the West when
the news of the repudiation of the Erskine agreement
reached the country. Mass meetings and cries of "British

39Kentucky Gazette, Jan. 31, 1809.

40Washington, Ky., Dove Feb. 17, 1810. The raising
of Marino sheep to begin commercial operations was advo-
cated by the Kentucky Gazette as early as Feb. 7, 1809.

perfidy" met the news of the repudiation. Bitterness against the British rose as the western farmers tended to blame the Orders-in-Council for their economic difficulties, a feeling that was compounded by the insult to American sovereignty implied by the repudiation of the measure that would have insured American rights on the seas. Another British insult had increased the tension and frustration growing in the western country.

When the repudiation notice reached Washington, Madison reversed the position he had taken after the agreement was drawn up by reinstating, on August 9, 1809, the non-intercourse provisions against the British. Most of the Republican party continued to support him in his measures of commercial coercion. Tension was not relieved when news of Erskine's replacement was made public.

The man chosen for the delicate negotiations between the British and the Americans was the "hatchet man of the Foreign Office," Francis James "Copenhagen" Jackson. Jackson as special ambassador to the Danish court in 1807 had presented an ultimatum to the Prince Regent of Denmark to abandon neutrality. When the Prince Regent refused to do so, the waiting British fleet opened fire on Copenhagen, destroying that city and killing hundreds. Jackson had

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42 Ibid.
43 Brant, Fourth President, 416.
given the order for the bombardment, and for this action was given the nickname that was to follow him throughout life. Therefore by the time Jackson arrived in the United States, his positions on neutrals and neutrality were well known. Madison returned home to Montpelier to await the arrival of Jackson, a show of unconcern that was matched by Jackson. The chauvinistic Jackson was appalled at the files of ex-minister Erskine, calling them "a mass of folly and stupidity" which, according to Brant, "made it charity to call him [Erskine] a fool." Jackson accused Erskine of being too easy on the Americans and said that he would respond to the American insults in a much different manner. "Perhaps if I can make them believe, as they safely may, that I shall give blow by blow, they will leave me in peace." Jackson then went about his work of returning "blow for blow."45

Unable to cope with Jackson, Smith had the negotiations taken from his hands by the President, and the talks became instead a series of notes exchanged between Jackson and Smith, with the latter's notes written by Madison. Both sides refused to make concessions, and Jackson, after reading a 4,000 word letter written by Madison, "exploded with anger and frustration." He claimed

44 Ibid., 417.
45 Ibid., 418.
Madison is now as obstinate as a mule. ... [Nothing] will suit him but the absolute surrender of our Orders-in-Council. Until he gets that, he will not even accept any satisfaction for the affair of the 'Chesapeake.' If, after this, we give them any satisfaction at all, we had better send it wrapped up in a British ensign, and desire them to make what use of it they please. 46

After exchanging a number of sharp notes, Jackson withdrew his delegation from Washington and went to New York, where he attempted to go over the head of the President by appealing to the American people. By making this move, Jackson lost any chance of working out an agreement with Madison. Following this action, Madison called for the withdrawal of the British minister, leaving both sides with ill-feelings. 47

From the beginning many Kentuckians were dissatisfied with the actions of the British government in this affair. James Taylor of northern Kentucky wrote to his cousin's husband, James Madison, that the people in the state "are very indignant at the conduct of the British government and highly approve that of our own." 48 The Kentuckians were very upset with the insults offered by Jackson, and this situation drove many of them to violent words if not to action. In Shelbyville two lawyers, Isham Talbot and

46 Ibid., 419.
48 James Taylor to Madison, October 20, 1890, Padgett, ed., "Letters of James Taylor to the Presidents of the United States," 260.
William Cook, were charged with violating the state law against the use of profanity in a public place. Talbot reportedly exclaimed "G__ damn Mr. Jackson; --the President ought to . . . have him kicked from town to town until he is kicked out of the country. G__ damn him!" Cook reportedly yelled, "G__ damn Timothy Pickering--he ought to be hung!"49

The General Assembly, meeting in December and January of 1809-1810, drew up a resolution to protest the actions of Jackson. They objected to

. . . the indecorous and unbecoming style used by Mr. Jackson, his Britannic Majesty's minister near the United States, in his correspondence with the Secretary of State, and above all his insulting imputations against the veracity and integrity of our government, were such as fully authorized the refusal, on the part of the Executive, any longer to recognize his diplomatic character. Resolved, that the insidious appeal made by the said Jackson to the people of the United States, under the disguise of a circular, addressed to the members of the diplomatic corps in the United States deserves the execration of every patriotic citizen. Resolved, that the General Assembly view with entire approbation, the conduct of our government in dismissing said Jackson, and that whatever may be the consequences resulting therefrom, the state of Kentucky will be ready to meet them, and will most cordially cooperate in the support of such measures as may be necessary to secure the interests, and maintain the honor and dignity of the nation.50

The same General Assembly made a move that brought

49 Quoted in Mayo, Clay, 325.
50 Acts, 1809, 167-68. The resolution was passed January 22, 1810.
Henry Clay to national attention. To fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Buckner Thruston, Senator from Kentucky, the legislature chose Henry Clay to fill the unexpired term, promoting the future "War Hawk" from the state scene to the national.\(^{51}\) One of the major chores of the Congress convening in the late days of 1809 was to draft and pass a measure to replace the Non-Intercourse Act; the act was generally considered to be impotent and the national treasury was in dire straits because of the lack of revenue from import duties. The measure was drawn up by Albert Gallatin and introduced by Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. The original bill, known later as the Macon Bill No. 1,

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\text{... provided for repeal of the Non-Intercourse Act (about to expire anyway), excluded British and French vessels (except in distress or on public business) from American harbors, and limited importations of British and French goods to those shipped in American vessels directly from the country of production. ... Like earlier measures, this one authorized the President to lift the restrictions on either belligerent in case it ceased to violate the neutral commerce of the United States.}^{52}\]

Although the Macon Bill was far less restrictive than either the Embargo or the Non-Intercourse Act, the Senate stripped it of its vitality by reducing it to a mere

\(^{51}\)Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., *Clay Papers*, I, 434n.

\(^{52}\)Brant, *The Fourth President*, 426.
statement excluding belligerent war ships from American territorial waters. It was in response to this measure that the young Senator from Kentucky first rose to speak.  

He had just taken his seat and under normal circumstances would not rise to speak, Clay stated,

...but Sir, when the regular troops of this house, disciplined as they are in the great affairs of the nation, are inactive at their post, it becomes the duty of its raw militia, however lately enlisted, to step forth in defence of the honor and independence of the country.  

Clay said that the Non-Intercourse Act was bad, but it did give some protection to American manufactures. Furthermore, the commercial coercive acts were

... an opposition to the offensive measures of the belligerents ... They presented resistance ...--the peaceful resistance of the law. When this is abandoned, with effect, I am for resistance by the sword.

No man in the nation desires peace more than I. But I prefer the troubled ocean of war, demanded by the honor and independence of the country, with all its calamities, and desolations, to the tranquil, putrescent pool of ignominious peace.  

He then stated that the objections of the New Englanders

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53 At the beginning of the session, Clay had not yet reached the constitutional requirement of 30 years, a fact that was ignored by the Kentucky General Assembly and his Senate colleagues. Mayo, Clay, 270.


55 Ibid., 448-49.
were false and maintained that there was a way for the Americans to take the war to the British. He stated that the British could be injured and the Americans could be aided. He told the Senate that

The conquest of Canada is in your power, I trust I shall not be deemed presumptuous when I state, what I verily believe, that the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and upper Canada at your feet. . . . Is it nothing to use to extinguish the torch that lights up savage warfare? Is it nothing to acquire the entire fur trade connected with that country, and to destroy the temptation and the opportunity of violating your revenue and other laws?56

Commenting on the contention that the British navy was the only barrier to France's conquest of the United States, Clay replied

I am willing, sir, to dispense with the parental tenderness of the British navy. I cannot subscribe to British slavery upon the water, that we escape French subjugation upon land.57

The final part of his speech was then an attack upon the emaciated Macon Bill. Clay attempted to have the Senate replace it with one that would have more teeth to it. 58

This speech is often cited as the opening gun for the War Hawks' struggle for war and a call for American conquest of Canada; in reality, it was nothing of the sort. The true intention of Clay was to get the Senate to make a

56 Ibid., 449-50.
57 Ibid., 451.
58 Ibid.
stronger stand on protecting American commerce, and to force the British to remove their commercial restrictions. This is clearly pointed out in a letter written by Clay to Thomas Smith on February 23, 1810, the day following Clay's address.

On yesterday the bill respecting our foreign intercourse, as amended in the Senate, passed, and was sent to the House of Representatives where it is confidently believed the amendment of the Senate will be concurred in—Should this take place, all our commercial restrictions having in view the coercion of foreign governments to abrogate their edicts, will be abandoned; and our commerce once more left to its fate. 59

Further insight into the meaning of the speech can be found in the next speech that Clay made on the Senate floor when he came to the defense of John Pope's suggestion that the national government protect infant American industries. The United States would not become another England over-night, Clay said; rather, it would only produce manufactured goods that it needed. The purpose of protection would be to encourage sufficient manufacturing to make the United States economically independent from Europe. Clay's speech on February 22 therefore was a cry for the continuation of commercial barriers against British manufacturers. 60

The tariff and the Non-Intercourse Acts had aided Kentucky industries, and Lexington, as the center of manufacturing

59 Clay to [Thomas Smith], [Feb. 23, 1810], ibid., 452.
60 "Speech on Domestic Manufactures" [March 26, 1810], ibid., 459.
in the state, desired some further protection for its industries. This is what the junior Senator from Kentucky was calling for in his speech of February 22, 1810. He wanted commercial coercion that would force the British and the French to stop seizing American shipments being sent to the European nations, but he also wanted a commercial device that would restrict the inflow of British goods coming into the United States. The Embargo was a possible means of achieving both these ends, and, following its repeal and the repeal of the Non-Intercourse Act, Clay called for the institution of a new means of protecting the infant industries that had developed during the struggles with Britain. The desire to protect the nation's honor may have been present in the speech, but another goal was to bring about the defeat of a bill that would end the protection offered by the Embargo and the Non-Intercourse Act.

Clay was joined by several congressmen who were anxious to take a more positive approach to the British problem than were the older Senators. Joseph Desha, member of the House of Representatives from Kentucky, stated on February 17, 1810 that

... we are verifying what the belligerents have said of us, that we were a nation of words and not of acts, too great an itching for for [sic] spouting, an apparent want of energy and decision--twelve weeks of the session have passed by, and nothing done worthy of your notice, our time principally consumed, in lengthy and I might add unnecessary [sic] debates on unimportant subjects, while the great national concerns,
touching on foreign relations are kept in the background—which (to a man who has not been taught to believe, war to be the greatest evil) is intolerable.

I fervently wish, my anticipations may not be verified [sic] the prostration of national honor, national degredation. . . . Nothing has transpired to Justify a conclusion that our enemies are disposed to relax, consequently we will have to obscure the neck, or fight—I wish a little of the fire of 76 could be infused in Congress—imbecile measures will not do much longer something must be adopted, to run us up together, we are too much divided, a small struggle would do it.61

Richard M. Johnson, Desha's Kentucky colleague in the House, further stated "If however G. Britain should take [offense] at the dismissal of Jackson . . ., I think it probable we shall . . . act worthy the descendants of the men of 76."62 These same Kentuckians would join Clay in the "War Hawk" Congress that convened in the winter of 1811, and declared war against Great Britain in the following spring. However, in the early months of 1810 the Kentuckians were not yet ready to agitate for a declaration of war. Later events would push them further in that direction.

Economic depression blamed on the British and French commercial measures, the diplomatic insults of "Copenhagen" Jackson and George Canning, the growing fear of national


humiliation over impressment, all added to the tension created earlier by the Chesapeake Affair and post-Revolution anti-British prejudices. This situation was heightened by the frustration that developed due to the failure of the Congress to find an effective, pacific solution to the problems with England. Macon's Bill No. 2 which opened American ports to English and French ships and hoped for an end of English and French commercial restrictions was a symbol of this failure. In the spring of 1810 most Kentuckians were not ready to call for a declaration of war, but they were rapidly approaching the point of being so. The final cause would not necessarily have to be a major incident, for the previous events had driven them to the brink of belligerency. Most Kentuckians were strong anti-British, and seemed to be growing more so as time passed. With each ensuing incident the gravity of the offence necessary to bring on a cry for war was diminished.
CHAPTER IV

TIPPECANOE AND WAR TOO

Following General "Mad Anthony" Wayne's victory over the western Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and the subsequent Treaty of Greenville, the Indian menace in the Ohio Valley was greatly suppressed. At Greenville the Indians ceded lands to the whites which allowed for uncontested expansion of settlers into much of Ohio and southeastern Indiana, creating a situation of which the frontiersmen quickly took advantage. 1 By 1803, barely eight years following the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Ohio territory was settled and admitted to statehood. By the early years of the nineteenth century, the frontiersmen began to apply pressure to the Indian tribes on the lands west of the Ohio country. As settlers continued to move into the Indiana Territory, chances of warfare between the Indians and whites increased. This possibility was enhanced by the appearance of a strong chief who offered resistance to the encroachment of the white man, the

1 The lands ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Greenville can be identified in Charles C. Royce, Indian Land Cessions in the United States (Washington, 1900), 654-57, and maps 17-20, 29, 49-50.
Shawnee Tecumseh. In Tecumseh the Indians found a leader around whom they could rally to defend their lands against the invaders.

Tecumseh, although not technically a chief, emerged as a leader of his people because of his intelligence and courage in battle. Tecumseh had probably fought at Fallen Timbers as a young man, and he realized the organized power of the settlers and the troops. To offset the power of the whites, Tecumseh proposed an Indian confederation in the West to keep Indian lands from falling into the hands of the whites. He advocated a form of Indian nationalism, and urged a return to the old ways of the Indians—a life-style uncorrupted by the white man. In advocating unity and purity, Tecumseh was aided by his brother, Elkswatawa, better known as The Prophet. The Prophet believed himself to be supernatural, and, because of his visions, he became a leader of a large group of Indians of many different tribes. The Prophet told the Indians that two separate spirits had created white men and Indians, and the creator of the Indians was angry with them. The Prophet warned, "He will destroy you unless you refrain from drunkenness, lying, stealing and witchcraft, and turn yourselves to him." He inveighed against all aspects of the white man's culture.2

2Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812 (New York, 1869), 189.
Because of his preachings, by 1808 The Prophet had drawn a large number of followers to his town on the banks of the Wabash River in the Indiana Territory, near its junction with the Tippecanoe River. The Prophet's Town (as it became known to the whites) soon became a rallying point for Indians from all over the old Northwest. 3

Besides preaching a return to Indian customs, Tecumseh and the Prophet began to argue that the lands inhabited by the Indians belonged to all of the Indians rather than just to those occupying the land. Because it belonged to all the tribes, no single tribe could sell the land to the whites. Any sale would have to be approved by all the tribes, an approval that would have been nearly impossible to achieve. 4 It was in this manner that Tecumseh hoped to stop the advance of the white men and preserve Indian identity. To achieve this goal, Tecumseh travelled north, west and south to convince the Indians to form a confederation to stop the spread of American settlers. Unlike King Philip of the Wampanoags or Pontiac, Tecumseh did not propose stopping the white man by force; rather, he proposed simply to avoid selling lands for future expansion to the whites. Despite these high ideals, Tecumseh's plan

3 Ibid., 190.

was ill-fated from the beginning. Even if he did not propose war, many of his white opponents did.

Tecumseh's plan, even though peaceful in purpose, began to alarm the whites. Fear of a British inspired Indian conspiracy was widespread in the west, and, despite the growing communities of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Indiana, few frontiersmen would be safe in a major British supported Indian war. The disasters of St. Clair and Harmar were still fresh in the minds of many westerners, who, like Felix Grundy, could well remember the shriek of

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Although Louis Hacker, "Western Land Hunter," 372-74, argues that the Indians were not a threat to white civilization in the Ohio Valley by 1810-1811 due to the rapid growth of population in the region, it should be remembered that the Indians were as much a psychological as a military threat. Despite the fact that the frontiersmen outnumbered the Indians in the west, few felt secure enough in their homes to disregard totally the Indian as a threat. When the war began, there were several instances of Indian attacks upon settlements very close to the Kentucky border, attacks that could easily have been directed against the Kentucky settlements. Henry Clay tells of a massacre on Silver Creek within 24 miles north of Louisville, Clay to [James Monroe], Sept. 21, 1812, Hopkins and Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, I, 729. Another Kentuckian, Samuel Goode Hopkins to Charles Scott, May 9, 1812, Richard C. Knopf, ed., The National Intelligencer Reports the War of 1812 in the Northwest, Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Northwest (6 vols., Columbus, Ohio, 1951-59), V, pt. I, 86-87, reported Indian hostilities just across the Ohio from Henderson, Kentucky, and proposed that a volunteer army be sent to aid Harrison, inasmuch as the Ohio River was the only barrier to the "same ruthless invasion" that the settlers in Indiana were experiencing. Thomas E. Craig to Ninian Edwards, April 28, 1812, E. B. Washburne, ed., The Edwards Papers (Chicago, 1884), 69, reported that an Indian attack on the Ohio River just below the mouth of the Green River killed three whites in the spring of 1812.
the savage and the threat of the scalping knife. To such people, old fears did not disappear suddenly.  

It was with growing anxiety that Kentuckians viewed the growing belligerency of the Indians congregated at Prophet's Town. In the spring of 1810, the Indians refused the "annuity salt" provided them. In order to preserve peace, Indiana territorial Governor William Henry Harrison invited Tecumseh to the territorial capital at Vincennes to discuss the situation. Tecumseh accepted the offer and arrived at Vincennes on August 12, 1810 at the head of four hundred warriors rather than the thirty that Harrison had expected. This influx greatly upset the citizens of Vincennes. After the hastened conclusion of the council, a council that was marked by the belligerent words and actions of both Harrison and Tecumseh, Harrison increased the training of the militia and requested the assignment of a detachment of regulars under his command.

In the spring of 1811, Indian raids against both white settlers and Indians friendly to the whites began to increase in the vicinity of Prophet's Town. This increased

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6 Grundy is quoted in Coleman, "Ohio Valley Preliminaries," 43.

7 Lossing, Field Book 1812, 191.

8 Ibid., 191-93; McAfee, War Western Country, 13.
activity created general alarm in the Indiana territory. In response Harrison threatened to attack the Indian settlements if Tecumseh and The Prophet did not restrain from attacking the settlers and their allies. Tecumseh had planned to postpone any conflict with the whites until he had amassed a sufficiently strong confederation of western tribes or until the expected war between England and the United States should begin. Therefore Tecumseh agreed to meet with Harrison to discuss a possible reconciliation. On July 27, 1811, Tecumseh preceded with three hundred Indians to Vincennes. In this case, however, much of the citizens' alarm was reduced by the presence of eight hundred militiamen. Tecumseh professed his friendliness to the whites but refused to turn over two Indians who were accused of committing murder in Missouri. Tecumseh wanted to discuss the Fort Wayne Treaty which had ceded Indian lands to the United States, but Harrison refused, saying that the treaty was now out of his power and in the hands

9Lossing, Field Book 1812, 193; McAfee, War Western Country, 15; W. A. Wentworth, "Tippecanoe and Kentucky Too," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 60 (January 1962), 37.

10 Lossing, Field Book 1812, 193; McAfee, War Western Country, 15; Gilpin, War in the Northwest, 6; Anonymous, The Life of Major General William Henry Harrison... (Philadelphia, 1840), 25.
of the President. The Council of 1811 adjourned with little accomplished. 11

Following this Council, Tecumseh took a small party of warriors into the southern Indian territories to argue in behalf of his proposed Indian confederation. He was thus out of the vicinity when the next phase of the conflict began. 12

The citizens of Vincennes believed that the Indian confederation already existed and thought that the Northwest territory was in grave danger from Indian attack. 13 Fearful of such an occurrence and believing war between the Indians and the whites to be inevitable, Harrison decided to take the offensive in Tecumseh's absence. He began to plan an attack against Prophet's Town. 14

Harrison proposed an ultimatum demanding the surrender of the murderers and barring all hostile Indians from passing through friendly Indian lands. He then would notify the friendly Indians that the Americans considered


12Lossing, Field Book 1812, 193.


14Gilpin, War in the Northwest, 8.
the Indians supporting The Prophet hostile; they were not to be given sanctuary. He then began to gather regular troops from Vincennes and Fort Knox, as well as militia from Kentucky and Indiana, to proceed against the Indians if necessary.

Harrison was joined by many Kentucky volunteers after gaining the support of Governor Charles Scott. Among those volunteering were many prominent citizens of the state including Joseph Hamilton Daviess, Abraham Owen, and Frederick Geiger.\(^{15}\) Some came for possible military glory, but many others came because of the threat of the Indians to the Western country.

Throughout the preparations for the campaign Harrison had been in communication with Secretary of War, William Eustis, and on October 12, 1811, Harrison finally received orders for the campaign from Eustis. They stated that The Prophet should be encouraged to disband his followers peacefully and Harrison should accept hostages to insure peacefulness of the Indians. If The Prophet refused, then the Indians were to be routed; The Prophet was to be taken prisoner, and the settlement destroyed. Harrison was authorized to go beyond these orders if he felt it necessary.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 8-10.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 13.
By November 6 the army had advanced to within two miles of Prophet's Town without meeting any hostile action by the Indians. Harrison was given a camp site near the town by the Indians and promises were exchanged by the whites and the Indians that battle would not begin until after talks between the leaders.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite his assurances, The Prophet decided to attack the army during the early morning hours of November 7, 1811. The Indian attack, in what became known as the Battle of Tippecanoe, came just before the army was aroused at 4:00 a.m., and caught the whites partially unprepared. Aided by the glare of the huge campfires built by the whites to protect them from the cold fall night, the Indians took an early advantage in the fighting. The Prophet had told his men that he would cast a spell whereby the bullets of the white men would not be able to penetrate the skin of the Indians and their powder would turn to sand.\textsuperscript{18} This promise may have accounted for some of the foolish courage displayed by the Indians. When daylight came, however, the advantage enjoyed by the Indians began to fade as Harrison's infantry and cavalry could now see to charge. The whites drove the Indians from the camp, thus bringing the Battle of Tippecanoe to its conclusion after two hours

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 15-16.

\textsuperscript{18}McAfee, \textit{War Western Country}, 31.
of fighting. Although Harrison had repulsed the enemy attack, he had not really routed the Indians. During the day the men cared for their dead and wounded and prepared defensive positions to ward off any further attacks by the Indians. Supplies were low and it was rumored that a major force under command of Tecumseh was advancing to the field. On November 8, a small cavalry detail scouted Prophet's Town and found it deserted. Supplies were taken and the town was then burned. With this action completed, Harrison's army began its long march back to Vincennes.

Following the Battle of Tippecanoe, Indian depredations increased on the frontier to a new peak, but by the spring of 1812, Tecumseh's goal of organizing an Indian confederacy of the west was damaged if not destroyed. Tecumseh had urged The Prophet to remain peaceful until Tecumseh's return, and the failure to destroy Harrison's army at Tippecanoe discredited The Prophet in most Indian eyes, making many tribes reluctant to join his confederation. And the battle had caused the destruction of

19 According to Gilpin, War in the Northwest, 16-19, of 1000 whites at the battle 62 died before November 18, 1811 and 126 more were wounded. There were from 500 to 800 Indians at the battle and 40 dead were found on the battle ground, although the Indians carried off many dead and wounded during the battle. Harrison's account of the battle can be found in Harrison to Eustis, November 18, 1811, Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters of Harrison, I, 618-31.
Prophet's Town and the death of many of Tecumseh's bravest followers. 20

The major result, however, of the battle was not military but psychological. The Indians were found to be using rifles and powder supplied from the British fort at Malden. Always suspicious of British-Indian collusion in the west, Kentuckians responded to the news with renewed hatred for the British and the Indians. Following the Battle of Tippecanoe, westerners began to agitate fiercely once again for war with England and her Indian allies. The relative passiveness of 1809 and 1810 turned to bitter hostility in 1811, and many westerners looked to war with England with enthusiasm as the only means of solving the Indian problem. 21 As one historian has noted, "The impressment of American seamen, they [Kentuckians] resented

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20 McAfee, War Western Country, 17, 41; Joe C. Creason, "The Battle of Tippecanoe, November 7, 1811," The Filson Club History Quarterly, XXXVI (Oct. 1962), 310. According to Creason The Prophet may have been a good prophet after all. He correctly predicted a comet which appeared before and during the battle, and further, he said that if the Indians did not drive the whites from the land then the earth would shake and uproot trees. One month after Tippecanoe, and on the very night after the comet disappeared, there was a great earthquake and trees were uprooted. The floor of the Mississippi River buckled, forcing it to flow upstream briefly. This was the New Madrid quake which, according to Creason, is "regarded as the most severe earthquake of recorded time."

21 Anonymous, Life of Harrison, 25. Isaac Barker in Lexington reported to a friend that "there is a great buzz of war here . . . .," Barker to Isaac R. Gwathmey, April 3, 1812, Gwathmey Family Papers (The Filson Club).
as an act insulting to their nation; the capture of American trading vessels, they regarded as 'Piracy'; but the inciting of savages was war." 22

When news of the battle reached Kentucky most people were outraged. Westerners had suspected an Indian-British alliance for some time and Tippecanoe seemed to confirm this suspicion. 23 Many newspapers in the state immediately linked the Indian warfare with other British hostilities. The Kentucky Gazette stated on November 19, 1811 in an article entitled "British-Savage War!" that

... war we now have; and when we consider that the blow is struck in the Western woods at the same moment that Great Britain is sweeping our vessels off the ocean, and her minister is making demands, which he knows can not possibly be indulged or acceded to, we can not but consider these events as proceeding from one common

22 McElroy, Kentucky in Nation's History, 328.

23 John Melish, Travels Through the United States. II, 177, reported that while in Louisville in September 1811 his fellow travellers believed "that there was unquestionable evidence of the Indians being stirred up by the British, and I found this to be the current belief here, ..." The Lexington Reporter of Nov. 2, 1811, quoted in Hacker, "Land Hunger," 381, stated that "the whole merit of stirring up Indians and all their dreadful warfare on the wives and children--blood, murder, and the tomahawk, are monopolized solely by our friends at Malden. ... We are persuaded that the Indian war will be found to be really British. The savages are only the allies of greater savages," E. Cruikshank, "The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812," 321-335, argues that in reality the British officials in Canada attempted to avoid a confrontation between the Americans and the Indians. Although the British agents were certainly sympathetic to the Indians, they still hoped to avoid a conflict. It would have been very difficult for the suspicious westerners to have believed this.
source—the English cabinet. Such has been her career from the beginning of the Revolution to this day; she has always been first to "light the savage fire." The Indians are but her allies, her agents. We hope, therefore to witness no more protracted moderation against such inflexible hostility. 24

Harrison further played upon the hostility felt by many Kentuckians when he reported that

Within the last three months, the whole of the Indians on this frontier, have been completely armed and equipped out of the King's stores at Malden. . . . The Indians had . . . an amply [sic] supply of the best British glazed powder, some of the guns had been sent to them so short a time before the action, that they were not divested of the list covering in which they are imported. 25

On November 27, 1811, Governor Charles Scott of Kentucky declared in a letter to Harrison that the Indians were urged on by the British. 26 This sentiment was repeated in Scott's annual message to the Kentucky General Assembly when he stated that

The Governor of the Indiana Territory, having received orders to establish some posts on the lands lately ceded by several Indian tribes up the Wabash, was attacked treacherously on the night of November last, by a large party of Indians—when to the honor of our countrymen, though taken under every disadvantage, and not

24 Kentucky Gazette, Nov. 19, 1811.

25 Harrison to Colonel John M. Scott, December 2, 1811, reprinted in Alfred Pirtle, The Battle of Tippecanoe (Louisville, 1900), 100-01. Fort Malden was just across the river from Detroit on Canadian soil.

superior in number, the enemy was repulsed on a hard fought field, with the loss, however, which is deeply to be regretted of a number of valuable lives. It is not to be believed that these Savages would contend, single handed, with the force of the United States, which they well know could crush them at a blow.--The hand of the British intrigue is not difficult to be perceived in this thing--The movements of the Savages in that quarter have indicated it for some time past. This, we have reason to believe, is only the precursor of a more weighty conflict: Let us, therefore, be prepared for the encounter. 27

He added in a call for volunteers, dated May 5, 1812, that "there is but little doubt, that war at this moment exists, and may be regarded as inevitable." 28

The Lexington Reporter echoed and intensified this sentiment by proclaiming that "War on the Wabash is purely British. . . . The British scalping knife has filled many habitations both in this state as well as in the Indiana Territory with widows and orphans." 29 Although the British depredations in the west did not affect commerce or industry, it did involve something "ten thousand times more valuable. . . . The lives of women and children on the frontiers are at stake, and the settlement of the western territories is deeply involved." 30 Thus to the editor of

27 Journal, Kentucky House, 1811, 8-12.


29 Quoted in Mayo, Clay, 398.

30 Ibid.
the Lexington Reporter, the British responsibility for Tippecanoe was tied inseparably to the other British outrages of the previous decade.

The Kentucky General Assembly echoed this belligerency by offering a resolution which denounced British encroachments. The legislature stated that public sentiment demanded that the country

... resist the repeated, long continued and flagrant violations of our rights as a free and independent nation, by Great Britain and France-- and by the former especially; whose pretentions are an insult to our sovereignty; and which, if yielded to, must end in our entire submission to whatever they may think proper to impose. ... Forbearance beyond a certain point ceases to be moderation; and must end in entire subjection. ... Should we tamely submit, the world ought to despise us. We should despise ourselves.31

Isaac Shelby believed that the Indians were being stirred up by the British and that the former were anxious to "extend their savage and barbarous devastations along the entire frontier."32 To alleviate this problem, many westerners proposed that Canada be conquered to end the British intrigue with the Indians. The Kentucky Gazette of April 14, 1812 saw this as a possible solution to the Indian problem, and warned that "Until those civilized allies of our savage neighbors are expelled from

31 Acts, 1811, 252-54.
our continent, we must expect the frequent occurrence of
the late scenes on the Wabash." Henry Clay said in
Congress that under current conditions the invasion of a
foreign nation would not be an offensive war, but, rather,
an attempt to wage an effective defensive war. The goal
was to drive the British from Canada to end British inter-
ference with the Indians living in United States' territory,
not to take virgin Canadian lands for future cultivation by
the people of the United States. The proposed American
invasion of Canada was not to be an end in itself; it was
to be the means to a more important end—the termination of
the Indian threat in the Northwest territory.33

To the westerners, the British obviously were respon-
sible for Tippecanoe. However, Tippecanoe was more than
simply one more British attack upon American patience; it
was a direct threat to the life and security of many

33 Kentucky Gazette, April 14, 1812; Speech Supporting
Bill to Raise Volunteers, Jan. 11, 1812, Hopkins and
Hargraves, eds., Clay Papers, I, 613-14; Pratt, "Western
War Aims," 41, 45. This is in marked contrast with the
interpretations advanced by Hacker, "Western Land Hunger";
Howard T. Lewis, "A Re-Analysis of the Causes of the War of
1812," Americana, VI (1911), 506-16, 577-85; and Ellery L.
Hall, "Canadian Annexation Sentiment in Kentucky Prior to
the War of 1812," Register of the Kentucky Historical
Society, XXVIII (Oct. 1930), 372-80. It is Hacker, Lewis
and Hall's contention that the declaration of war was
forced through Congress by the West so that the rich
Canadian lands could be opened to the frontiersmen who were
rapidly wearing out the lands of the Mississippi and Ohio
Valleys. The complaints of Indian atrocities, impressments
and ship seizures were only rhetoric designed to achieve the
westerners' more selfish goals. The best repudiation of
this thesis can be found in Pratt, "Western War Aims."
westerners. Tippecanoe joined impressment, ship seizures, the Chesapeake Affair, British-blamed depression in the west, and the Anglo-phobia remaining since the Revolutionary struggle to produce open hostility. The open belligerency expressed following the Chesapeake Affair had slowly receded as Jefferson and Madison attempted to alleviate the problems existing with the British through diplomatic and commercial measures, but the Battle of Tippecanoe coincided with the admitted failures of economic coercion and produced increased hostility toward the British.

To many Kentuckians Tippecanoe was the opening blow in the inevitable struggle between the British and the Americans. A Kentuckian writing to the Philadelphia Aurora, in a letter dated December 14, 1811, stated that "Upon our frontier the work of blood has commenced. . . . After this, will any doubt? Will any waver? . . . Whoever hesitates may be set down to George III." War existed on the western frontier and even though no British soldiers

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34 McAfee, War Western Country, 8; Creason, "Tippecanoe," 301; James Taylor, Sr., to James Taylor, Jr., May 12, 1812, James Taylor Papers (The Filson Club). Taylor Sr., recognized war with the Indians existed and that war with the British was probable, although he did not see it as inevitable. John Pintard still hoped for "an adjustment of our dispute with England" even at that late date; John Pintard to Mrs. Richard Davidson, Dec. 11, 1912, Miscellaneous Papers (The Filson Club).

35 Quoted in Mayo, Clay, 397.
were present, the frontiersman truly believed that the British were responsible and that the Indians were only their "hired assassins."

For most Kentuckians, it was now only necessary for the Congress to declare war on the British. Although a few people in Kentucky would oppose war measures (such as John Pope who voted against the war declaration in the Senate), the great majority of the people desired such action. 36

When war became a probability, former Governor Isaac Shelby, hero of the battle of Kings Mountain in the Revolution, was called out of retirement to lead the state in "those times of danger and peril..." Many Kentuckians, knowing a war was coming, wanted to have a proven warrior as Governor. 37

The Battle of Tippecanoe has been suggested to have been a clash between civilization and savagery, and a

36 Coulter, "Prologue" to Clift, Raisin, 27. Pope's actions are discussed in Orval W. Baylor, "The Life and Times of John Pope, 1770-1845," Filson Club History Quarterly, IV (April 1941), 62, and Orval W. Baylor, John Pope, Kentuckian (Cynthiana, Kentucky, 1943), 83-94. Neither of these accounts gives much insight into Pope's reasons for voting against the war. Baylor suggests that Pope's former Federalism may have been the cause, or, perhaps more realistically, his fear that the nation was not prepared in 1812 to fight a war against the British. Pope, himself, offered yet another explanation in a letter to his nephew, Pope to Ninian Edwards, Nov. 9, 1809, Washburne, ed., Edwards Papers, 36-41. Pope seemed to be generally anti-war and saw little good to come from wars.

37 Jno. Monroe to Col. Isaac Shelby, June 8, 1812, Isaac Shelby Papers; Isaac L. Barker to Isaac R. Gwathmey, March 31, 1812, Gwathmey Family Papers.
struggle over who should take advantage of the western lands, but it was more. The battle, because of the supposed British support of the Indians, was the event that brought war to the western country. Grievances had been building and all that was required was a spark and war finally came to the west.

Congress would then decide if Britain should be officially fought along with the Indians, since the evidence was abundant that the British were being fought unofficially. In either case, Kentuckians were prepared psychologically and had expressed their desire for war. The final decision was made in Congress, perhaps for far different reasons than those expressed by the people of Kentucky.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

War was finally declared by Congress against Britain on June 18, 1812. Although several Kentuckians played important roles in the passing of the war measure, they may or may not have been acting with motives consistent with the motives of Kentuckians in general. To many Kentuckians, Congress was only admitting the inevitable since the Battle of Tippecanoe showed that war existed between the westerners and the British and Indians.

Roger H. Brown has suggested that war between England and the United States in 1812 came because of national political considerations which is beyond the scope of this study. Fearful that public unrest would lead to their defeat in the election of 1812, the Republicans went to war in 1812 to save, at least in their minds, republican government in the country, by eliminating the means by which the Federalists could win control. Brown, however, is more concerned with the effect of the unrest than with the unrest itself.

The causes of the unrest have been studied by various historians for many years. Some have argued that war was
desired because of the British insults to the national
honor through impressment, ship seizures, and the
Chesapeake Affair, as well as the diplomatically insulting
Erskine and Jackson affairs. Westerners, as impetuous
frontiersmen, supposedly perceived these insults more
readily than did their "civilized" eastern brethren.
Furthermore, according to this interpretation, the
westerners wanted to handle the insults in a frontier
manner, i.e. by resorting to violent means to right the
insult. This would explain the westerners' desire for war
as opposed to the easterners' reluctance to fight.

Other historians have seen land-hunger for Canadian
lands as the central theme, while others claim that the
desire to control the fur trade and to exterminate the
Indian as a dangerous threat was the primary cause of the
conflict. Still other historians have claimed that a
southern and western depression from 1805 to 1812 was
blamed on British actions, and that the economic hardship
created by this depression caused the people to desire war
to end the British activities and thus restore prosperity.
In such a maze of interpretation, Kentucky can be used as a
test case to examine the causes of public unrest.

In Kentucky, as shown previously, almost all of these
elements arose, making one speculate that perhaps all of
the explanations for the causes of the war are correct. It
seems that fear of a loss of national honor, discontent
over failing economic conditions blamed on the British, and fear and outrage over the supposed British-inspired Indian confederacy on American soil as shown by the Battle of Tippecanoe, combined with the anti-British attitude coming out of the American Revolution to produce a deeply perceived feeling of being wronged in the minds of many Kentuckians.

Attempts by the government to end these British wrongs failed, leaving by 1812 no alternative but a declaration of war. Grievances had to be settled, and by 1812 few Kentuckians who perceived the damage being done by the British could offer any other course of action.

Seen in this light, Kentuckians' desire for war was the culmination of a long series of insults and injuries at the hands of the British. Although war was desired at various stages along the chain of wrongs, it was the additive effect which eventually produced the public unrest which drove the Congress to declare war. By 1812, to many Kentuckians a declaration of war was the only course of action that promised any success in solving the problems which confronted them.

In such an interpretation, the statements made by such Kentuckians as Governor Charles Scott and George Washington Cooke and the Kentucky General Assembly emerge as more than mere rhetoric. Instead of simply listing abuses in order to justify their selfish actions, these detailed
explanations for belligerency may be viewed as being an accurate listing of the causes which drove them to desire war.

Governor Scott stated that

The moment has arrived when we are called on by the general government to contribute our proportion of men, to meet the approaching contest with G. Britain. There is but little doubt, that war at this moment exists, and may be regarded as inevitable. . . .

The events which have led to the present crisis in our affairs are known to all. To recapitulate the wrongs we have so long borne from the British government, is almost to record our own infamy. They are to be found in the blood of our slaughtered unoffending brethren; in the groans and stripes of thousands of our countrymen, impressed and confined at this moment in the floating dungeons; forced to turn their arms against the country which gave them birth and friends and relatives dear to their hearts. To an unblushing claim, avowed and enforced, to take our vessels and property wherever found, when destined to a power on amity with us, which she may please to be at war with. In compelling us to pay a tax before she will permit us to trade with her enemy, when she grants licenses to her own subjects, to trade with that very enemy free of expense. In demanding of us to force her enemy to receive her manufactures. The measure of our wrongs is filled up by every wanton insult which she can offer in our own ports, and finally has overflowed by her placing the scalping knife and tomahawk in the hands of the Indians on our frontiers, who are daily murdering our peaceful citizens and defenceless women and children.¹

Echoing the multiplicity of reasons for war was George Washington Cooke, speaking before a gathering in Montgomery

County. Cooke said that "England has violated her neutral Rights. Seized and plundered our Vessels, and illegally condemned them as lawful prizes—Neither can I overlook the impressment of our fellow citizens and Seamen. . . ."

Furthermore, England had violated the rights of the Americans "to trade and carry our produce where ever we please."

Cooke's greatest invective was aimed, however, at the British intrigue among the Indians. "The British have hyred the Savages on the Habitants of our frontier, and massacred innocent and defenceless families . . . we are filled with indignation." After recounting the Indian atrocities on the frontier, Cooke concluded that "we must again Scourge the British Bloodhounds, and Repel Savage Barbarity."  

The General Assembly stated that the crisis in the public affairs of the nation was brought about by "the repeated, long continued and flagrant violations of our rights as a free and independant nation . . . and which, if yielded to must end in our entire submission. . . ." These violations were then summed up by the legislature when it stated that

. . . we have discovered a systematic course of injury from her [Britain] toward our country,

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2 An Oration Delivered by George Washington Cooke . . . 14 day of May 1812, Kentucky Manuscripts, Draper Collection, 5CC33 (The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin).
evidencing too strongly to be mistaken, an utter disregard of almost every principle of acknowledged right between independent nations; endeavoring by almost every act of violence on the high seas; on the coasts of foreign powers with whom we were in amity; and even in sight of our own harbors, by capturing and destroying our vessels; confiscating our property; forcibly imprisoning and torturing our fellow citizens; condemning some to death; slaughtering others, by attacking our ships of war. Impressing our seamen to man her vessels; bidding defiance to our seaports; insulting our national honor by every means that lawless force can devise; inciting the savages (as we have strong reason to believe) to murder the inhabitants on our defenseless frontiers; furnishing them with arms & ammunition lately to attack our forces, to the loss of a number of our brave men; and by every act of power and intrigue, seeking to dispose of our whole strength and resources, as may suit her unrestrained ambition or interest. . . . 3

The causes of belligerency in Kentucky were far too complex to be limited to one factor. "War fever" in Kentucky was created not by any single incident or situation such as impressment, ship seizures, the Chesapeake Affair, economic depression, land hunger, or fear of an Indian confederation; rather, it came because of the cumulative effect of these problems. War was desired in 1812 because all pacific attempts to alleviate the problem had failed and war appeared to be the only alternative that offered any solution. The importance of a solution was evident to the General Assembly when it stated that "Forbearance beyond a certain point, ceases to be moderation;

and must end in entire subjection."\(^4\) With all pacific means exhausted by 1812, the resistance to subjection thereafter would take the form of "a Flaming Sword . . . unsheathed and nothing to appease its wrath, or cool its Rage but British blood."\(^5\) For these reasons, many Kentuckians in public and private life were satisfied to find war declared against the British in 1812, which resulted in the end of unredressed insults and injuries.

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Oration by George Washington Cooke, Draper Collection, 5 CC 33.
A. Newspaper Sources

The most valuable single source used in this study was the Kentucky Gazette for the period 1803-1812. The Gazette was a weekly publication printed in Lexington by John Bradford, and was very much a Republican party newspaper. As events escalated, the Gazette became more belligerent toward the British. A second newspaper urging for war, perhaps earlier and more emphatically than the Gazette, was the Lexington Reporter. The Reporter was valuable for this study from its first issue, published in 1808, to the coming of the war in 1812.

One of the more interesting newspaper sources was The American Republic published in Frankfort by Humphrey Marshall from 1810 to 1812. Marshall was probably the most outspoken Federalist in the state, if not the most influential. The American Republic constantly leveled attacks against both Democratic politicians and Napoleonic France. One must question exactly how much influence such a paper had among the great majority of the citizens of the state, but it definitely represented a vocal minority of Kentuckians.
There were also other Kentucky newspapers that were useful, but not available in complete file through this period. They were: The Weekly Messenger and The Dove published in Washington, Kentucky; The Candid Review published in Bardstown; The Western Citizen published in Paris; and The Informant published in Danville. Although long runs of these papers were not available for examination, individual, scattered issues were helpful.

An interesting and useful source was a collection of newspaper reports assembled by Richard C. Knopf, ed., The National Intellegencer Reports the War of 1812 in the Northwest (Columbus, Ohio, 1957-1959), 6 vols. The National Intellegencer published in Washington, D.C. was the semi-official paper of the Madison administration. The accounts of events concerning Tippecanoe and much of the correspondence between principal figures in that conflict were published by the Intellegencer. Despite the obvious political bias, the collection was valuable in finding the statements of the people involved as well as in seeing the type of news concerning Tippecanoe reaching the people of Kentucky.

B. Legislative Documents

Publications issued by the government of Kentucky during the period 1803-1812 were of two general types. The first type was the legislative journals of the annual meetings of the Kentucky House of Representatives and the
Kentucky Senate which contained the official business of the General Assembly. Although these journals do not contain the debates carried on by the members of the legislature, they do contain the votes and bills proposed, and the annual messages of the governor on the problems he saw facing the state. These journals are published under the general titles of Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . and Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . . The journals appeared annually and were printed in Frankfort. The annual legislative session usually began late in the year and the Journal was printed early in the next year. Because of this, the Journal for the session beginning, for example, in December 1811 should have been printed and dated in 1812. However, perhaps through oversight, some of the Journals have printing dates which would imply that the Journal was published midway through the session, which was not the case. Although this was a minor error, it was an irritation in finding the desired Journals.

The second type of state publication of the Commonwealth was a collection of the legislative actions published under the general title Acts Passed at the . . . Session of the . . . General Assembly for the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . , which appeared annually. These were very beneficial in locating certain anti-British legislation and also helpful in that the General Assembly attempted to influence
the actions of the national government through passing resolutions directed against the belligerents. These resolutions passed by the General Assembly are perhaps illustrations of public opinion, however, as with newspaper articles, the validity of this assumption may be questioned. Closely related to the Acts was William Littell, The Statute Law of Kentucky with Notes, Practections and Observations on the Public Acts (Frankfort, 1811), 3 vols., a collection of the laws of Kentucky. Although it was similar to the Acts, it was much better organized and therefore easier to use.

Somewhat less important were the debates of the United States Congress which were published under the title, The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States. . . . These are commonly referred to as the Annals of Congress. The Annals were examined sporadically for the period 1803-1812, and were of some help.

C. Private Correspondence

The private and public papers of many leading men concerned with the history of Kentucky have been collected and published in the last few years and provide valuable sources to understanding this period. The most useful of these sources was James F. Hopkins and W. M. Hargraves, eds., Papers of Henry Clay (Lexington, 1959- ), 4 vols. to date. During this period Clay was one of the leading Republicans in the state and served in the General Assembly,
United States Senate and was Speaker of the national House of Representatives, where he became one of the leading "war hawks" in the Twelfth Congress of 1811-1812. Volume I contains most of the pertinent information for the period under study.

Isaac Shelby, the hero of the battle of Kings Mountain and the first governor of Kentucky, was elected governor for a second term in 1811 when war seemed evident. Some of his papers can be found in W. W. Longmoor, ed., "Correspondence of Governor Isaac Shelby," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 8 (Jan. 1910), 105-11, (May 1910), 15-20, (Sept. 1910), 23-26 and ibid., 9 (Jan. 1911), 57-63, and in the Isaac Shelby Papers (The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).


Another interesting source was the exchange between Commodore James Barron, commander of the Chesapeake, and S. P. Humphreys, commander of the British ship Leopard. These exchanges during the incident and Barron's subsequent report can be found in Americanization Department, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, America: Great Crisis In Our History Told by Its Makers (Chicago, 1925), 20 vols.

Many manuscript collections were examined which helped to assess the temper of the times although some were not cited in the text. The more valuable were: The Joseph Hamilton Daveiss and Samuel Daveiss Papers, 1786-1855 (The Filson Club); Samuel McDowell Letters to Andrew Reid, 1783-1814 (The Filson Club); Gwathmey Family Papers, 1811-1902 (The Filson Club); John Pintard to Mrs. Richard Davidson, December 11, 1811, Miscellaneous Papers (The Filson Club); Letters of James Taylor (Kentucky State Historical Society,
Frankfort); and Robert Breckenridge McAfee, Journal, 1803-1807 (The Filson Club).

D. Pamphlets and Contemporary Accounts

Robert B. McAfee also provided a very enlightening contemporary account of the events leading to war in History of the Late War in the Western Country (Lexington, 1816). McAfee participated in the Western war and offers perceptive insight into the cause of belligerency in the West.

Further insight into the conditions in Kentucky prior to the war can be found in John Melish, Travels Through the United States of North America in the Years 1806 and 1807 and 1809, 1810 and 1811 (Philadelphia, 1812) 2 vols. Melish was a British citizen who passed through Kentucky late in 1811 at the time of the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Although the Federalist party did not have a strong organization in Kentucky prior to the war there were many men who were in opposition to the majority party. Their position was presented by their most vocal spokesman, Humphrey Marshall, The History of Kentucky (Frankfort, 1824).

Few pamphlets have survived from this period dealing with Kentucky reaction to foreign affairs. The most interesting are entitled At a Meeting of the Citizens of Franklin at the State House in Frankfort, on Friday the 24th of July, 1807, for the purpose of taking into
Consideration the depredations, insults and outrages committed by British subjects, on the property, rights, and persons of American citizens . . . [n.p., n.d.], and An Oration delivered by George Washington Cooke . . . 14 day of May, 1812, Draper Collection (The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin), 5CC33. The microfilm edition used was prepared by the University of Chicago Department of Photoduplication. The first pamphlet tells of a protest meeting in regard to the Chesapeake Affair. The second is an attack upon British outrages against the people of the United States in general and the West in particular.

SECONDARY SOURCES

The causes of the war have been studied by historians almost from the beginning of that struggle. This topic has been discussed fully by many historians although none has centered his study on Kentucky. Despite this failure, many historical interpretations of the events leading to hostilities have pertinence to this thesis. The best survey of the literature up to 1941 is found in Warren H. Goodman, "The Origins of the War of 1812: A Changing Interpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVIII (Sept. 1941), 171-87. Although Goodman's study is somewhat dated, he provides a good starting point for study in the era.
Several interpretive studies were examined to see if they shed any light on the situation in Kentucky. These studies provided factual material in many cases, but more importantly, they helped explain some aspects of Kentucky's actions as part of a larger process. The most valuable of these interpretive studies were: Roger H. Brown, *The Republic in Peril: 1812* (New York, 1964); Louis M. Hacker, "Western Land Hunger and the War of 1812: A Conjecture," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, X (March 1924), 365-95; Julius W. Pratt, *The Expansionists of 1812* (New York, 1925), and "Western War Aims in the War of 1812," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, X (June 1925), 36-50; George Rogers Taylor, "Prices in the Mississippi Valley Preceding the War of 1812," *Journal of Economic and Business History*, III (Nov. 1930), 148-63, and "Agrarian Discontent in the Mississippi Valley Preceding the War of 1812," *Journal of Political Economy*, XXXIX (Aug. 1931), 471-505; Norman K. Risjord, "1812: Conservatives, War Hawks and the Nation's Honor," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, XVIII (April 1961), 196-211; and A. L. Burt, *Great Britain, the United States and British North America from the Revolution to the Establishment of After the War of 1812* (New Haven, 1940).

Several studies supported these interpretations either by expanding them, modifying them or testing them on a specific locality. These also gave factual material which
was useful, but they also gave insight into the larger picture. The most important of these were: Ellery L. Hall, "Canadian Annexation Sentiment in Kentucky Prior to the War of 1812," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 28 (Oct. 1930), 372-80; Margaret K. Latimer, "South Carolina Protagonist of the War of 1812," American Historical Review, LXI (July 1955), 914-30; Bradford Perkins, Prologue to War; England and the United States, 1805-1812 (Berkeley, 1961); Reginald Horsman, The Causes of the War of 1812 (Philadelphia, 1962), and "Who Were the War Hawks," Indiana Magazine of History, LX (June 1964); Roger Brown, "The War Hawks of 1812, An Historical Myth," Indiana Magazine of History, LX (June 1964); Irving Brant, James Madison: the President, 1809-1812 (Indianapolis, 1956), and The Fourth President; A Life of James Madison (Indianapolis, 1970); Victor A. Sapio, Pennsylvania and the War of 1812 (Lexington, 1970); Ronald L. Hatzenbuehler, "Party Unity and the Decision for War in the House of Representatives, 1812," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, XXIX (July 1972), 367-90; Christopher B. Coleman, "The Ohio Valley in the Preliminaries of the War of 1812," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, VII (June 1920), 39-50; and Curston D.H. Goldin, "Causation of the War of 1812," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 48 (April 1950), 107-20.

Another useful source in following the events preceding
the war are biographies of the leading men of the period. Perhaps the single most important figure in Kentucky in this period was Henry Clay. Although the biographies of Clay are numerous, the best dealing with these years are Bernard Mayo, *Henry Clay: Spokesman of the New West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), and Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay* (Boston, 1937). Of these two studies the most valuable was Mayo, both because of his greater thoroughness and his insight into conditions in Kentucky during this period.

Another leading Kentucky "war hawk," Richard M. Johnson, is studied in Leland Winfield Meyer, *The Life and Times of Colonel Richard* (New York, 1932). Meyer fails to bring much insight into the conditions prior to the war in Kentucky or into Johnson himself in this period.

Not everyone in Kentucky agreed with Clay and Johnson on the desirability of war. Matthew Lyon, in the House of Representatives, was known to oppose war against England, and John Pope, in the Senate, voted against the war declaration in 1812. Neither of these figures has been the subject of an adequate biography although both have been examined. Tom W. Campbell, *Two Fighters and Two Fines; Sketches of the Lives of Matthew Lyon and Andrew Jackson* (Little Rock, 1941); James Fairfax McLaughlin, *Matthew Lyon, the Hampden of Congress, a Biography* (New York, 1900); Lyda Peek Smith, "Matthew Lyon in Kentucky,"
masters thesis, Western Kentucky University, 1932, have all studied Lyon without revealing his motivation in opposing war. The same is true of Orval Walker Baylor, John Pope, Kentuckian: His Life and Times, 1770-1845 (Cynthiana, Kentucky, 1943); and Orval W. Baylor, "The Life and Times of John Pope, 1770-1845," The Filson Club History Quarterly, XV (April 1941), 59-77. Baylor fails to determine how Pope could arrive at his decision to vote against the war.

William Henry Harrison, the governor of the Indiana territory was not a central figure in this study but a very unusual biography presented for his 1840 presidential campaign was examined in regard to Tippecanoe: anonymous, The Life of Major General William Henry Harrison . . . (Philadelphia, 1840). It is not an unbiased account, but it is very interesting. A more recent biography is Freeman Cleaves, Old Tippecanoe; William Henry Harrison and His Times (New York, 1939).

Just as with Pope and Lyon, no really outstanding biography exists of Isaac Shelby. The best examined for this study was Mrs. W. E. Shirley, "Isaac Shelby; Pioneer, Soldier, Statesman," Master's Thesis, Western Kentucky University, 1934, but this study was far from adequate for Shelby's role in the period before the war.

Finally, John Breckinridge, Senatorial leader and Jefferson's Attorney General has been studied by Lowell H.
Harrison, John Breckinridge; Jeffersonian Republican (Louisville, 1969). Although Breckinridge died in 1806, he provides background to attitudes in Kentucky which culminated in the outcry for war in 1812.

The Burr conspiracy was an important incident in Kentucky during this period, and captured the attention of Kentuckians. The best study of this affair is Thomas Perkins Abernethy, The Burr Conspiracy (New York, 1954).

Histories of Kentucky filled in many gaps in the study, especially Robert McNutt McElroy, Kentucky In the Nation's History (New York, 1909). This study devoted considerable time to the reaction in Kentucky to the events leading to war. Other useful histories were Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (Lexington, 1960), and W. E. Connelly and E. Merton Coulter, History of Kentucky (Chicago, 1922), 5 vols. Somewhat less useful were Mann Butler, A History of the Commonwealth of Kentucky (Louisville, 1824); Z. F. Smith, The History of Kentucky (Louisville, 1895); and Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky (Covington, 1847). The latter was particularly disappointing in its treatment of the period.

Kentuckians, however, in many cases were reacting to diplomatic pressures. These diplomatic incidents are discussed in many works. The best study dealing with the impressment question is James Fulton Zimmerman, Impressment of American Seamen (Port Washington, New York, 1966;
originally published, 1925). This study is still the only work devoted to this question. Non-importation is discussed by Herbert Heaton, "Non-Importation, 1806-1812," *Journal of Economic History*, I (Nov. 1941), 178-98. The Embargo of 1807 is best studied by L. M. Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo* (Durham, 1927). Sears is very pro-Jefferson and pro-embargo.


These works were useful for filling in information.

The final event in the West which created unrest and led to hostilities was the Indian problems in the Northwest Territory. There have been numerous secondary works

The lands over which these conflicts took place can be located in very good maps in Charles C. Royce, *Indian Land Cessions in the United States* (Washington, 1900).
APPENDIX
APPENDIX I

Chart 1

MONTHLY INDEX OF WHOLESALE PRICES OF WESTERN PRODUCTS AT NEW ORLEANS, 1804-1812

(Monthly Average 1805-06 Equals 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1804</th>
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<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>104</td>
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<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
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<td>104</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>Mar.</td>
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<td>101</td>
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<td>Apr.</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>July</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>Aug.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>77</td>
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<tr>
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<td>76</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Yearly Av.  87  102  98  95  81  84  88  79  76

aWeighted arithmetic mean of the relatives, the relatives being weighted according to the value of the product.

bIn George Rogers Taylor, "Prices in the Mississippi Valley Preceding the War of 1812," Journal of Economic and Business History, III (Nov. 1930), 149.

sAverage for four months.
Chart 2

MONTHLY INDEX OF WHOLESALE PRICES OF IMPORTED GOODS AT NEW ORLEANS, 1805-1812a

(Average for 1805-06 Equals 100)b

<table>
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<td>Yearly Av.</td>
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<td>94</td>
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</table>

aWeighted arithmetic mean of the relatives, the relatives being weighted according to the value of the product.

bIn George Rogers Taylor, "Prices in the Mississippi Valley Preceding the War of 1812," Journal of Economic and Business History, III (Nov. 1930), 161.