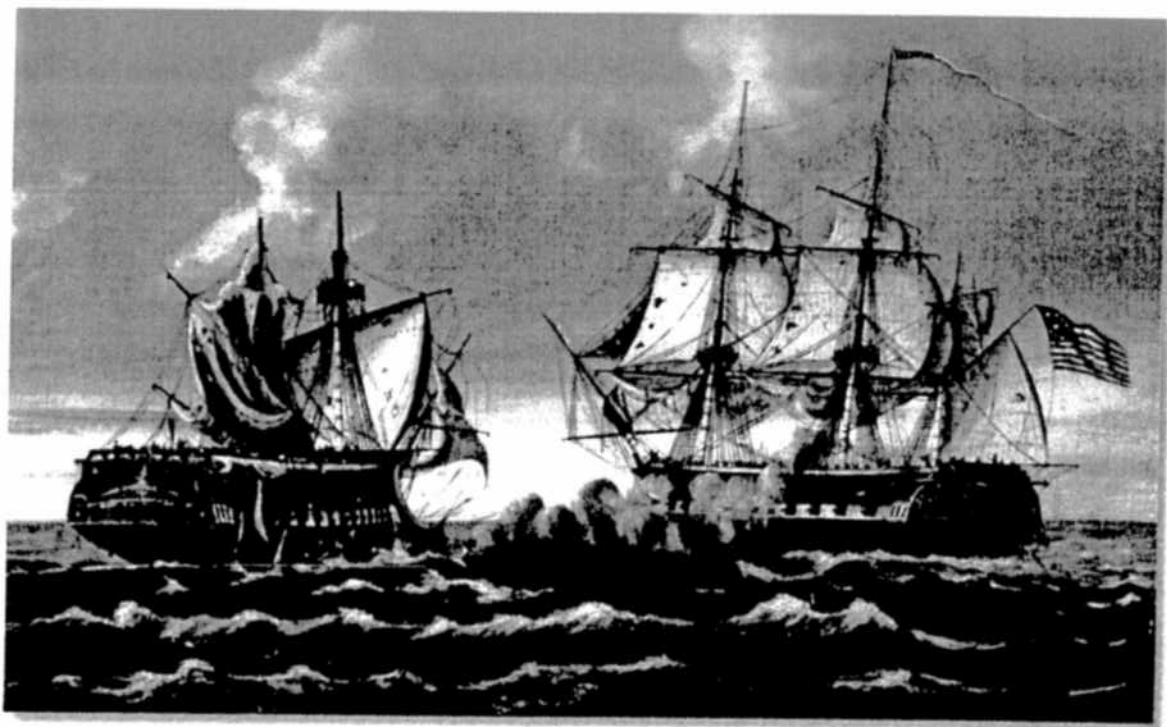


# The War of 1812 Begins

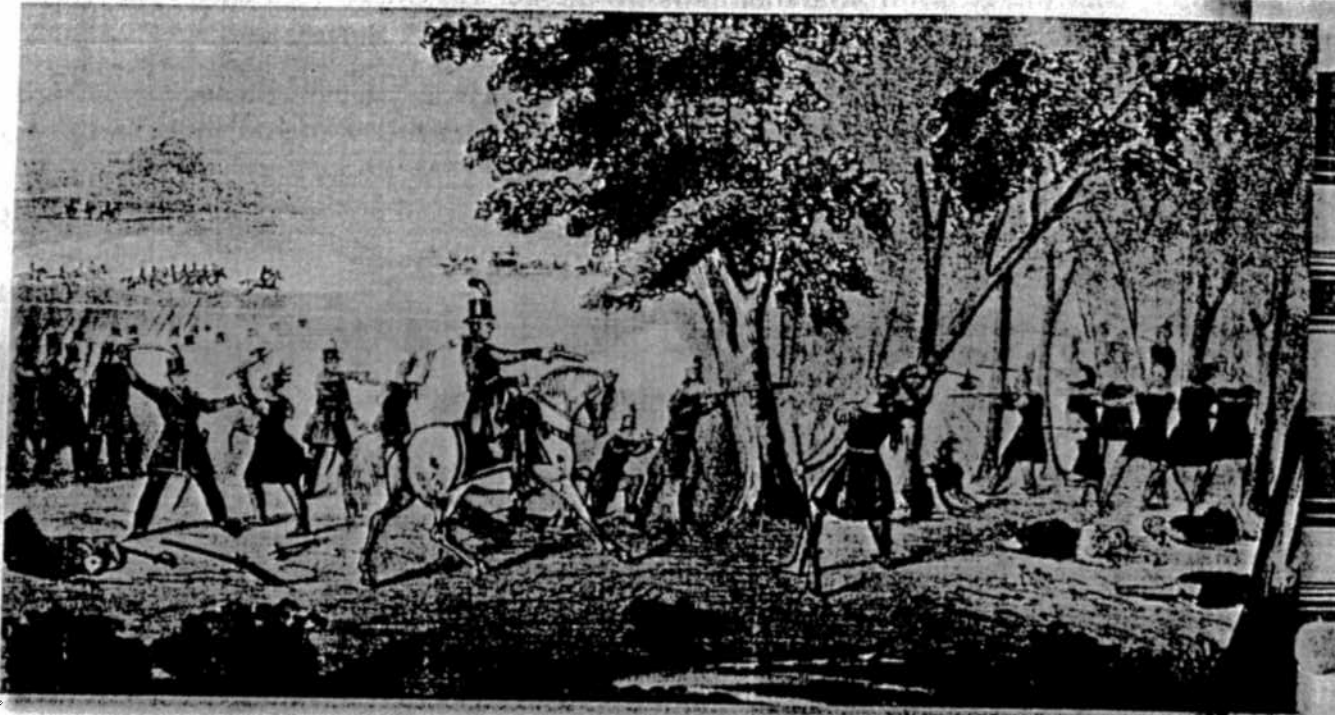
Americans felt proud. They had a special government. It was called a democracy (duh-MOK-ruh-see). The people had a voice in who their rulers were. They had a say in what their laws would be. And, they were making a new capital city. It was Washington, D.C.

Americans built ships. They used them to trade. The ships went to Europe and Asia. They sailed to Africa and South America. By 1800, America had more ships than Great Britain. But Great Britain was the "Ruler of the Seas." Great Britain did not want another nation to have more ships. So, British ships stopped American ships at sea. The British would steal the cargo on the ship. Or, they would take over the ship. The British sunk ships, too! This made Americans mad.



There was a big area of land. It was called the Ohio River Valley. On one side was the United States. On the other side was Canada. American Indians already lived there. Then, Americans moved there. These Americans were called settlers. The Indians did not like the new people moving in. They spoke to the leaders of the United States. But no one listened. So the Indians went to the British in Canada. The British gave guns to the Indians. They also gave the Indians bullets. The British told the Indians to kill the settlers. The settlers asked the United States government for help. They wanted to be safe. As time went by, there was more fighting. Lots of people died. Americans said that the British were using the Indians to fight a war.

In 1809, James Madison was the president of the United States. He was the fourth president. He did not want a war. The navy had few ships. And, the army was small. The men in the army were not skilled. He did not dare to fight Great Britain. He did not think that his nation would win.



The War Hawks were men who wanted to fight. In 1811, many of these men joined Congress. They wanted a war. So Congress took steps to start a war. It spent money. It improved the navy. It built up the army. On June 18, 1812, Congress declared war. President Madison agreed.

The American army went into Canada. They fought the British. They thought that they could win the war. But these first attacks did not work. The American generals made mistakes. They did not make good plans. Their troops had few of the things they needed. Things were looking good for the British.

### Comprehension Question

Name two reasons that the war started.