

The War of 1812

Narrator: The place: just outside the Virginia Capes. And the year: 1807. An American frigate, the *Chesapeake*, has been fired on and boarded. Four sailors are taken off the *Chesapeake* to the British ship *Leopard* and impressed into English naval service. Britain, at war with France, faced the conqueror of Europe Napoleon Bonaparte. English ships hovered off American ports ready to seize vessels and cargo destined for France.

The United States was expanding westward. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 had doubled the size of the young republic. The Mississippi was now open to its mouth. Down the western rivers went the pioneers. But the British hold on the forts in the Northwest Territory gave them control of the lakes and of the Indians in the area. Naturally, the American frontiersmen wanted the British to get out. Their spokesmen in Congress, the War Hawks, clamored for war. But on the Eastern Seaboard [...]