

Student Essay on American Nationalism After the War of 1812

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Essay

The outcome of the War of 1812 was surprising and unexpected. The British were dominating most of the war, such as the burning of Washington, but in a surprise upset in the battle of New Orleans the over confident British were destroyed. This upset brought around the Treaty of Ghent, which led to an armistice between the two countries. Having beaten the British again, the American people developed a strong sense of nationalism.

This war may not have been fought by America as unified because the North was very against the war, compared to the south, but the outcome produced one nation of people united together. The people got the sense of nationalism because they had defeated the British yet again, and they were now seen as a military threat. This raised more feelings of nationalism because they could be proud of their country now because the rest of the world was recognizing America. The collapse of the Federalist Party was also an event that shaped the feelings of nationalism.

Feelings of nationalism were also able to spread through American literature. Writers such as Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper wrote books that helped promote American nationalism. Nationalism was further heightening by a plan that Henry Clay came up with. This plan known as the American System, started with building a strong banking system, then moved on the implementing a protective tariff, which caused eastern manufacturing to grow. The final part of the American system was transportation. The networks of roads and canals allowed supplies to move all over the country. Supplies were moved from North to South to East to West. This form of transport kept each area dependant on the other areas for supplies, and therefore kept them economically and politically connected. This strengthened nationalism even more because America was no longer split South, and North. It was a united country politically and economically tied.