

Topic Page: [Treaty of Ghent \(1814\)](#)

Definition: **Ghent, Treaty of** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(1814) Agreement ending the War of 1812 between Britain and the USA. It appointed a commission to settle the dispute about the USA-Canada boundary.



Image from: [British and US delegates meet to sign the Treaty... in Britain and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History](#)

Summary Article: **Ghent (1814), Treaty of**
from *Encyclopedia of United States Indian Policy and Law*

The Treaty of Ghent (1814) officially ended the War of 1812 (1812–1814) between the United States and Great Britain. The treaty is sometimes known as the Christmas Eve Treaty because it was signed on December 24, 1814. It is noteworthy that the Battle of New Orleans, which garnered a great deal of military fame for future president Andrew Jackson, occurred after the treaty was signed. Due to slow communications, American and British forces involved were unaware the war had ended.

The United States sought peace early in the conflict. As early as June 18, 1812, the day war was officially declared, Secretary of State James Monroe summoned the British minister to inform him of the declaration and to urge him to work toward peace.

In March 1813 the Russian minister to the United States, Andrei Dashkov, told the James Madison administration he would help lead negotiations, though the British eventually rejected the use of the Russian intermediaries. Prior to this rejection, Madison chose three peace commissioners to send to Moscow: Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin, American ambassador to Russia John Quincy Adams, and James Bayard of Delaware. The three arrived in Russia unaware that the British had already rejected the Russian proposal. In January 1814 Gallatin and Bayard left Russia after six months of nonnegotiations and traveled to London en route to the United States. They found the British willing to negotiate. A new peace commission was then formed that included Adams, Gallatin, Henry Clay, and Jonathan Russell.

Negotiations lasted from August 8, 1814, to December 24, 1814. The British wanted the Indian tribes on the western frontier of the United States to be protected in the peace settlement and called for the installment of a permanent barrier or reservation to be established for them in the Old Northwest. They also sought title to northern Maine and northern present-day Minnesota and wanted the United States to demilitarize the Great Lakes. The British were concerned about the safety of Canada, which was the focus of many of their demands, particularly the Indian buffer-zone.

The United States representatives rejected the British proposals. They were particularly upset with the Indian barrier, which they claimed undermined American sovereignty, national security, and plans for westward expansion. The British exchanged their demand of an Indian barrier for a pledge to restore the status of the Indians in the Old Northwest to their 1811 status, or before the Battle of Tippecanoe. The United States refused this proposal as well, and in October 1814 the British suggested that each side retain whatever territory it held at the end of the war. Again the Americans refused.

With the threat of another expensive year of overseas fighting ahead of them and still engaged in a war with France, the British relented on their demands. The Treaty of Ghent restored the *status quo ante*

bellum, or the state that existed before the war. Each side agreed to evacuate enemy territory and not carry off enemy property. In addition, each nation promised to make peace with the Indians and return to them possessions, rights, and privileges which they had enjoyed before the 1811 battle. A commission was established to answer questions about the Canadian-American border, and both nations promised to end the slave trade.

See also *Gallatin, Albert; Great Britain, Indian Policy of; War of 1812 (1812–1814)*.

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