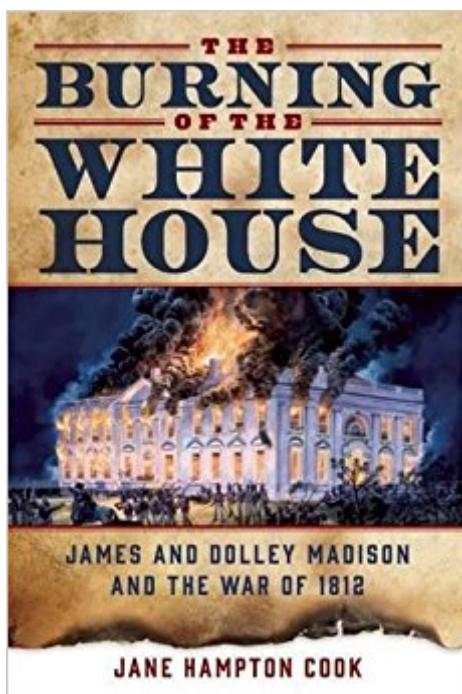


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# The Burning Of The White House: James And Dolley Madison And The War Of 1812



## Synopsis

It's unimaginable today, even for a generation that saw the Twin Towers fall and the Pentagon attacked. It's unimaginable because in 1814 enemies didn't fly overhead, they marched through the streets; and for 26 hours in August, the British enemy marched through Washington, D.C. and set fire to government buildings, including the U.S. Capitol and the White House. Relying on first-hand accounts, historian Jane Hampton Cook weaves together several different narratives to create a vivid, multidimensional account of the burning of Washington, including the escalation that led to it and the immediate aftermath. From James and Dolley Madison to the British admiral who ordered the White House set aflame, historical figures are brought to life through their experience of this unprecedented attack. The Burning of the White House is the story of a city invaded, a presidential family displaced, a nation humbled, and an American spirit that somehow remained unbroken.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Burning of the White House is an important look at one of the most underappreciated and perilous periods in our past. This book does a wonderful job of capturing the great leadership of not only President Madison but First Lady Dolley as well . . . Great job!" BRIAN KILMEADE, cohost of Fox & Friends, host of Kilmeade and Friends, and author of Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates "Jane Hampton Cook once again brings to vivid life stories of the White House and its occupants and the times in which they lived. In her latest book, we learn about the figures around James and Dolley Madison; both historical and ordinary; who were witnesses to the

divisive time in our nation's history when we came dangerously close to losing the capital city and perhaps the Union itself." &#151; ANITA MCBRIDE, assistant to President George W. Bush and chief of staff to First Lady Laura Bush, and executive in residence at the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies, School of Public Affairs at American University "The Burning of the White House tells the exhilarating story of a pivotal moment in American history. Jane brings to life the fascinating men and women who helped our nation survive its second war for independence, and offers a captivating look at the burning of our capital city." &#151; CALLISTA GINGRICH, president of Gingrich Productions and author of the New York Times bestselling Ellis the Elephant Series "Never have I read a more compelling rendition of the plots and subplots leading up to the dastardly burning of Washington, D.C. by the British in 1814, and its horrific destruction followed by the somber aftermath to rebuild a city by those whose very lives had been broken. The author is a master storyteller who makes history a true page-turner that contains all of the elements of a drama. She cleverly weaves pages seamlessly filled with quotes that become readable dialogue to flesh out protagonists, antagonists, intrigue, and conflict. This is real history that allows the reader to feel the emotions nearly always lacking in nonfiction." &#151; LUCINDA J. FRAILLY, director of education and special events coordinator, First Ladies National Historic Site, National First Ladies' Library "From the moment Jane Hampton Cook first toured the White House as an employee there, she herself was lit by a fire to tell the untold story of the woman who could be called our Founding Mother, Dolley Madison. Jane possesses both the scholarship and storyteller's passion for bringing new generations into the intimate, immediately daring intrigues of our nation's history. In short, she brings The Burning of the White House story alive in a way that emboldens us now to be better citizens, and to count our blessings for our forebears' acts of great courage and prescience to imagine a better world for future Americans who will find themselves surprisingly inspired by the tales of those who built our democracy." &#151; BOBETTE BUSTER, story guru, former adjunct professor, University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, writer/producer, and author of *Do Story: How to Tell Your Story So the World Listens* "Author Jane Hampton Cook has done it again! She has written a well-researched new book entitled *The Burning of the White House*; James and Dolley Madison and the War of 1812. It is filled with historic facts, figures, and insightful stories about the buildup to the war, the lives of the fourth President of the United States and the First Lady, and the Executive Mansion. It is a wonderfully documented study of one of our nation's early historical events." &#151; NANCY THEIS, presidential writer for President Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush "Jane Hampton Cook has emerged as one of America's

leading and important historians, especially on the country's early days. In her new book, *The Burning of the White House*, Cook reveals new facts about that awful event which were previously unknown. Her writing is lively and engaging, honest and fresh. Cook asks the reader to simply enjoy her book and no doubt many will. I did!" &#151; CRAIG SHIRLEY, Reagan biographer and presidential historian "Jane Hampton Cook's latest book proves to the reader to look to our past for the strength to guide us in our country's future. In *The Burning of the White House*, the Madisons, through their commitment, bravery, and love of country, provide us an excellent lesson in hope and a determination to save our beloved nation. This book is more than an excellent tribute to people of substance; it is a reminder of what we nearly lost and must preserve." &#151; DR. LINDA SUNDQUIST-NASSIE, retired American history teacher and author of *The Poetess of Song: The Life of Mary Shindler* "The Burning of the White House is a lively, engaging read. It's told through some characters we don't often meet, such as Senator Rufus King&#151;Federalist and bitter opponent of President Madison&#151;and offers a unique, fresh twist on a familiar story." &#151; MATTHEW GILMORE, editor, H-DC, Washington, D.C.

History Network

**The White House in Flames** In 1814, Washington was set alight by the invading British, in an outrage unequaled until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. How did it happen? How did the scholarly president James Madison, &#147;the father of the Constitution,&#148; react? And how did his socialite wife, Dolley Madison, respond to the invasion of the redcoats? Here, in *The Burning of the White House*, award-winning author Jane Hampton Cook brings this exciting story to life&#151;from the intrigue of disloyal cabinet members, to the pacifist Quaker faith of the lively and defiant Dolley Madison, to adventures involving future president James Monroe, amateur poet Francis Scott Key, and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* author Washington Irving. *The Burning of the White House* gives you a front row seat at one of the most dramatic, contentious, and dangerous times in American history, with New England threatening secession (fifty years before the South seceded, precipitating the Civil War), British Rear Admiral George Cockburn plotting his attack on the newly independent nation's young capital, and President Madison's opponents criticizing him for being weak and ineffectual before Madison, in the end, emerged victorious. Colorful, informative, and a tremendous read, *The Burning of the White House* is a riveting account of the first great war in America's post-independence history, sure to merit a place on any history lover's bookshelf.

If you seek a gushy, gossipy history with clear cut good guys and bad guys, then this is your book. The Americans are the good guys, the British the bad. Everything the Americans do is pictured in the best light, everything the British do is portrayed in dark hues. If you wish a scholarly, thoughtful, and subtly nuanced account of the events in the Washington campaign look elsewhere. This book reads almost like a Georgette Heyer regency romance, although this author lacks her grace with words. The author understands little about military men and their concerns. She completely misreads the British leader, Rear Admiral George Cockburn, constantly referring to him as a pirate, buccaneer, or evil intentioned court jester. She constantly posits he smiled with glee every time he destroyed an American town; a brigand masquerading as a military man. Cockburn was no foolishly impulsive pirate but a skilled strategist and a talented tactician. The author calls him a "slippery snake," but he was actually a man of honor who lived by a demanding code. He was a fine seaman and a gifted leader of men ;tough, ruthless, able. His men idolized him. His campaigns were well and intelligently planned. His objectives were sensible given whathe hoped to accomplish. The Washington campaign reflected poorly on the American war effort since nearly all military actions were carried out badly and wrong. The British performed brilliantly, something which the author seems loathe to admit. The material about the love between James and Dolley Madison is entertaining and if the author had just focused on that I would give this book much higher marks. The author is not a bad story teller but not a very good historian.

The Liberty Belles Literary Society Book Club of Virginia chose, "The Burning of the White House" for our Sept. read. The author, Jane Hampton Cook, was kind enough to attend our monthly meeting. What a treat! All members agreed the book is full of tantalizing details we never learned in History class. Ms. Cook leaves the reader with a renewed appreciation of the sacrifices and determination of the Madison's and many other great Patriots in preserving our Nations freedom.

Lost because of the fighting between the political parties. A lesson well learn in the current poltical sitution. Learn from past events.

Nice read. Jane Hampton Cook balances deeply researched details and threads it all over a narrative that is well-paced. One thing I particularly like comes from the author's attention to add context. I enjoy history books the most when I learn the "why" behind things happened the way they did -- not just the facts of what -- and providing enough understanding about the personalities (namely the Madisons) and the politics during that time.

An interesting look at Washington City and the surrounding area in the early 1800's. A good look at a unknown and overlooked piece of American history.

Ms. Cook is an excellent story teller. She doesn't just give the reader a better understanding of the 4th President and the First Lady, but also gives a good description of a fairly unknown war. It was a quick read that I just could not put down.

Excellent book. I will never again hear the Star Spangled Banner without picturing what caused those words to be written. Jane Hampton Cook is a masterful storyteller.

Great book....fun to read!

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