



About the Play

Forged by Fire follows Paul Jennings, Dolley Madison, James Madison and other notable individuals during the War of 1812 and recreates the events surrounding the British attack on Washington and the burning of the White House on August 24, 1814.

Through provided character biographies, journals, and a full script, students will research and perform their character to understand the many unique and complicated viewpoints the Madison administration navigated on the path to, and during, the War of 1812. This play will help students to answer these essential questions:

- Who were the War Hawks and the Federalists? How did their views on potential/ongoing war with Britain differ?
- What strategies brought both military success and disaster to the United States during the War of 1812?
- How did Dolley Madison position the White House at the center of Washington, D.C., society?
- What role did enslaved and free White House workers play in the evacuation of the White House?

Process

The variety of materials included allows for multiple approaches to *Forged by Fire*. By design, the execution of the character assignment, research, reading, and performance of the play during your class's War of 1812 unit is as follows:

- Use the Cast List to assign students their characters and speaking roles
- Distribute Character Biographies to the appropriate students, allowing them the opportunity to read and research their character and understand the role they play in the larger context of events.
- Allow students time to complete their Character Journal.
- Practice and perform the play
- Allow students time to reflect on the plot of the play and how the events and decision-making process unfolded.

Additional Resources

The White House Historical Association also offers a number of other free education resources, and many relevant articles hosted on our website at www.whitehousehistory.org.

Any questions please contact education@whha.org