



Name _____

The Storm that Saved Washington

On August 25, 1814, British forces entered Washington D.C. after routing the Americans at Bladensburg, Maryland. British forces promptly burned everything in sight and soon the White House, U.S. Capitol, the Treasury, and other important landmarks were in flames. The following day, however, a freak storm in the capitol region, possibly the remnants of a hurricane, miraculously extinguished the hundreds of raging fires. Even stranger still, the storm spawned a rare Washington tornado, which tore through the heart of the city, launching cannons into the air, killing a number of British soldiers. The storm saved the city from further destruction, and at least in part, prompted the British to evacuate. In all the British occupation of Washington lasted a mere 26 hours.

In the spirit of the storm that saved Washington, pretend you were a spectator on August 26, 1814, trying to relate the story to a newspaper reporter trying to get a first hand account of the situation. How would you respond? Be as descriptive as possible.

Reporter to (Sir or Madam): I understand you were in the center of action in downtown Washington on the 26th, What was the city like before the storm?

Reporter to (Sir or Madam): There are unconfirmed reports that a tornado tore through Constitution Avenue downtown. What was the reaction of the British soldiers in the area who have never experienced a summer storm in Washington?

Reporter to (Sir or Madam): What were your first thoughts after the storm?