

Berkin Miller Cherny Gormly Egerton Woestman

# Making America

*A History of the United States*

Brief  
Fifth Edition

VOLUME I: TO 1877



# Making America

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VOLUME 1: TO 1877

# Making America

*A History of the United States*

Brief  
Fifth Edition

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# Preface

 Our goal for this textbook is deceptively simple: We want to tell the story of America from its earliest settlement to the present, to make that story complete and interesting, and to tell it in a language and format that will help students enjoy learning that history. We have been faithful to the narrative of American history contained in the full version of *Making America*, but we have been determined in our effort to reduce the length by one-third. The clear chronology, straightforward narrative, and strong thematic structure of the full text remain. We have also retained what is now a hallmark feature of *Making America*, that is, pedagogical tools that allow students to master complex material and enable them to develop analytical skills. Chapter outlines, Chronologies, focus questions, and in-text glossaries provide guidance in every chapter. We also introduce a new feature called “Investigating America” that gets to the heart of learning history. Last but not least, a more open, one-column, page design allows students to access and use the pedagogy to improve their learning.

Streamlining a well-developed narrative is never easy, but wherever possible, to retain the book’s narrative flow, we have cut words and avoided excising larger sections. Of necessity, fewer details may appear on some topics, but we have been careful not to lose the many examples that give the narrative its rich flavor. We trust that in pruning the text with a discerning eye, we have allowed the major themes of *Making America* to stand out clearly.

From the beginning, our goal has been to create a different kind of textbook, one that meets the real needs of the modern college student. Nearly every history classroom reflects the strong cultural diversity of today’s student body, with its mixture of students born in the United States and recent immigrants, both of whom come from many different cultural backgrounds, and its significant number of serious-minded men and women whose formal skills lag behind their interest and enthusiasm for learning. As professors in large public universities, we know the basic elements that both the professor and the students need in the survey text for that classroom. These elements include a historical narrative that does not demand a lot of prior knowledge about the American past; information organized sequentially, or chronologically, so that students are not confused by too many topical digressions; and a full array of integrated and supportive learning aids to help students at every level of preparedness comprehend and retain what they read.

In *Making America*, Brief Fifth Edition, students will find a genuine effort to communicate with them rather than impress them. And *Making America* presents history as a dynamic process shaped by human expectations, difficult choices, and often surprising consequences. With this focus on history as a process, *Making America* encourages students to think historically and to develop into citizens who value the past.

Yet as veteran teachers, the authors of *Making America* know that any history project, no matter how good, can be improved. For every edition of *Making America*, we have subjected our text to critical reappraisal. We eliminated features that professors and students told us did not work as well as we had hoped; we added features that we believed would be more effective; and we tested our skills as storytellers and biographers more

rigorously each time around. This Brief Fifth Edition reflects our willingness to revise and improve the textbook we offer to you.

## The Approach

Professors and students who have used previous editions of *Making America* will recognize immediately that we have preserved many of its central features. We have again set the nation's complex story within an explicitly political chronology, relying on a basic and familiar structure that is nevertheless broad enough to accommodate generous attention to social, economic, and diplomatic aspects of our national history. We remain confident that this political framework allows us to integrate the experiences of all Americans into a meaningful and effective narrative of our nation's development. *Making America* continues to be built on the premise that all Americans are historically active figures, playing significant roles in creating the history that we and other authors narrate.

This approach has guided us in choosing the names by which we identify ethnic groups. As a general rule, we have tried to use terms that members of the group used themselves at the time under consideration. However, when this usage would distract readers from the topic to the terminology, we have used terms in use today among members of that group, while acknowledging variations by region and preference.

## Themes

This edition continues to thread the five central themes through the narrative of *Making America*. The first of these themes, the political development of the nation, is evident in the text's coverage of the creation and revision of the federal and local governments, the contests waged over domestic and diplomatic policies, the internal and external crises faced by the United States and its political institutions, and the history of political parties and elections.

The second theme is the diversity of a national citizenry created by both Native Americans and immigrants. To do justice to this theme, *Making America* explores not only English and European immigration but immigrant communities from Paleolithic times to the present. The text attends to the tensions and conflicts that arise in a diverse population, but it also examines the shared values and aspirations that define middle-class American lives.

*Making America*'s third theme is the significance of regional subcultures and economies. This regional theme is developed for society before European colonization and for the colonial settlements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is evident in our attention to the striking social and cultural divergences that existed between the American Southwest and the Atlantic coastal regions and between the antebellum South and North, as well as significant differences in social and economic patterns in the West.

A fourth theme is the rise and impact of large social movements, from the Great Awakening in the 1740s to the rise of youth cultures in the post-World War II generations, movements prompted by changing material conditions or by new ideas challenging the status quo.

The fifth theme is the relationship of the United States to other nations. In *Making America* we explore in depth the causes and consequences of this nation's role in world conflict and diplomacy, whether in the era of colonization of the Americas, the eighteenth century independence movement, the removal of Indian nations from their traditional lands, the impact of the rhetoric of manifest destiny, American policies of isolationism and interventionism, or the modern role of the United States as a domi-

nant player in world affairs. In this edition, we have continued to broaden this theme to encompass American history in a global context. This new focus allows us to set our national development within the broadest context and to integrate the exciting new scholarship in this emerging field of world or global history.

## Learning Features

The chapters in *Making America*, Brief Fifth Edition, follow a format that provides students with essential study aids for mastering the historical material. Each chapter contains a topical outline of the material students will encounter in the chapter and a compelling introduction. “Individual Choices” provides a brief biography of a woman or man whose life reflects the central themes of the chapter and whose choices demonstrate the importance of individual agency, or ability to make choices and act on them. A chapter Chronology provides a detailed list of key events during the chapter’s period. To help students focus on the broad questions and themes as they read, we provide critical thinking, or focus, questions at the beginning of each major chapter section. Each chapter also contains two or three “Investigating America” features, each of which contains a brief primary source or primary source excerpt related to the text, along with a series of thought-provoking questions about that source. “Investigating America” allows historical figures to speak for themselves and encourages students to engage directly in historical analysis. “Investigating America Online” icons placed next to relevant content in the chapter direct students to additional primary source material/pedagogy found on the chapter’s website—offering a variety of opportunities for examining historical evidence throughout the course. Each chapter concludes with a summary that reinforces the most important themes and information the student has read, and a list of key historical terms, with page numbers that will guide students back through the chapter.

The key terms are also highlighted and defined in *Making America*’s on-page glossary. The brief explanations of major events, people, or documents as they appear in the narrative provide a handy roadmap for test review. But our on-page glosses go one step further. We have also highlighted and defined vocabulary terms that could be unfamiliar to students with limited language proficiency or for whom English is a second language. By defining these words the first time they appear, the on-page glossary helps students build their vocabularies and ensures that they have full access to the narrative. Perhaps most important, the on-page glossary of historical key terms and vocabulary allows us to communicate fully to student readers the precise usage and character of a complex historical narrative.

The illustrations and maps in each chapter provide a visual connection to the past and its context, and their captions analyze the subject and relate it concretely to the narrative.

## New to the Fifth Edition

In this new edition we have preserved what our colleagues and their students considered the best and most useful aspects of *Making America*. We also have replaced what was less successful, revised what could be improved, and added new elements to strengthen the book.

You will find many features you told us worked well in the past: Individual Choices, focus questions, Chronologies, and maps. You will also find new features that you told us you would like to see. “Investigating America” was developed in response to reviewers who asked for more opportunities for their students to work with primary source material. Both instructors and students have told us how important it is for students

to be able to relate to the history they are studying. To that end, our boxed feature, “It Matters Today,” points out connections between current events and past ones and asks discussion and reflection questions that challenge students to see the links between past and present. We encourage faculty and students to challenge each other with additional “It Matters Today” questions and even to create their own “It Matters Today” for other aspects of the textbook’s chapters.

We the authors of *Making America* believe that this new edition will be effective in the history classroom. Please let us know what you think by sending us your views through <http://www.cengage.com/highered>.

## Learning and Teaching Ancillaries

The program for this edition of *Making America* includes a number of useful learning and teaching aids. These ancillaries are designed to help students get the most from the course and to provide instructors with useful course management and presentation tools.

Kelly Woestman has been involved with *Making America* through previous editions and has taken an even more substantive role in the fifth edition. We suspect that no other technology author has been so well integrated into the author team as Kelly has been with our team, and we are certain that this will add significantly to the value of these resources.

## Website Tools

The **PowerLecture CD-ROM** features the **Instructor’s Resource Manual** written by Kelly Woestman of Pittsburg State University, primary sources with instructor notes in addition to hundreds of maps, images, audio and video clips, and PowerPoint slides for classroom presentation. The **Examview™** test bank is also found on the **PowerLecture CD-ROM**. Provides flexible test-editing capabilities of the Test Items written by Volker Jannsen of Cal State Fullerton.

**HistoryFinder** helps instructors create rich and exciting classroom presentations. This online tool offers thousands of online resources, including art, photographs, maps, primary sources, multimedia content, Associated Press interactive modules, and ready-made PowerPoint slides. HistoryFinder’s assets can easily be searched by keyword, or browsed from pull-down menus of topic, media type, or by textbook. Instructors can then browse, preview, and download resources straight from the website.

The **Student Website** contains a variety of tutorial resources including the **Study Guide** written by Kelly Woestman, ACE quizzes with feedback, interactive maps, primary sources, chronology exercises, flashcards, and other activities. The website for this edition of *Making America* will feature two different audio tools for students. These audio files are downloadable as MP3 files. **Audio Summaries** help students review each chapter’s key points.

The *Making America e-book*, an interactive multimedia e-book links out to rich media assets such as video and MP3 chapter summaries. Through this e-book, students can also access self-test quizzes, chapter outlines, focus questions, chronology and matching exercises, essay and critical thinking questions (for which the answers can be emailed to their instructors), primary source documents with critical thinking questions, and interactive maps.

Please contact your local Cengage Learning sales representative for more information about these learning and teaching tools in addition to the **Rand McNally Atlas of**

**American History**, WebCT and Blackboard cartridges, and transparencies for United States History.

## Acknowledgments

*Making America*, Brief Fifth Edition, has benefited from the critical reading of instructors from across the country. We would like to thank these scholars and teachers: **Robert Cray, Montclair State University; Jennifer Fry, King's College; Michael Gabriel, Kutztown University; Stephen Katz, Community College of Philadelphia; Kurt Kortenhof, Saint Paul College; Mark Kuss, Our Lady of Holy Cross College; Suzanne McCormack, Community College of Rhode Island; Bryant Morrison, South Texas College; David Parker, California State University Northridge; Laura Perry, The University of Memphis; Steven Rauch, Augusta State University; and Kathryn Rokitski, Old Dominion University.**

Douglas Egerton, who developed the “Investigating America” section and served as the abridging editor of *Making America*, Brief Fifth Edition, would like to thank Alison Games for the use of Little Mo, her ancient but intrepid laptop, and for everything else. As always, this book is a collaborative effort between authors and the editorial staff of **Wadsworth/Cengage Learning**. We would like to thank Ann West, senior sponsoring editor, and the talented, committed members of the editorial staff at **Wadsworth/Cengage Learning** who encouraged and generously assisted us every step of the way.

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# A Note for the Students: Your Guide to Making America

Dear Student:

History is about people—brilliant and insane, brave and treacherous, loveable and hateful, murderers and princesses, daredevils and visionaries, rule breakers and rule makers. It has exciting events, major crises, turning points, battles, and scientific breakthroughs. We, the authors of *Making America*, believe that knowing about the past is critical for anyone who hopes to understand the present and chart the future. In this book, we want to tell you the story of America from its earliest settlement to the present, and to tell it in a language and format that helps you enjoy learning that history.

This book is organized and designed to help you master your American History course. The narrative is chronological, telling the story as it happened, decade by decade or era by era. We have developed special tools to help you learn. The paragraphs following this note will introduce you to the unique features of this book that will help you understand the complex and fascinating story of American history.

At the back of the book, you will find some additional resources. In the Appendix, you will find an annotated, chapter-by-chapter list of suggested readings. You will also find reprinted the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Here, too, a table gives you quick access to data on presidential elections. Finally, you will see the index, which will help you locate a subject quickly if you want to read about it.

In addition, you will find a number of useful study tools on the *Making America* companion site. These include ACE quizzes with feedback, primary sources, and other activities—all geared to help you study, do research, and take tests effectively.

We hope that our textbook conveys to you our own fascination with the American past and sparks your curiosity about the nation's history. We invite you to share your feedback on the book: you can reach us through Cengage Learning's website: <http://www.cengage.com/highered/>.

Carol Berkin, Chris Miller, Bob Cherny, Jim Cormier, Doug Egerton, and Kelly Woestman

Each chapter of *Making America*, Brief Fifth Edition, includes the following features:

Each chapter opens with “Individual Choices.” These biographies show how historical events are the results of real people making real choices. Some of the featured individuals are famous historical figures. Others are ordinary people who played an important role in shaping the events of their era.

Alongside Individual Choices on the first page of each chapter, a **chapter outline** shows, section by section, the topics you will encounter in the chapter. Turn the page, and on the chapter’s third page, the **Chronology** provides a detailed list of key events during the chapter’s period.

Within the chapter, you’ll find **Focus Questions** at the beginning of the chapter’s major sections. These questions guide you to the most important themes in each section.

The **On-Page Glossary** briefly explains key terms and vocabulary in the margin of the page where the term first appears. The glossary will help with difficult words you find

in this chapter, which may be especially useful if English is not your first language. Key historical study terms are also listed at the end of the chapter, with page numbers, so that you can use the glossary as a review tool. Glossary terms are also bolded in the index for your reference.

At a couple of appropriate points in the chapter, one-page **Investigating America** features present a document related to the chapter narrative. These documents (also called primary sources) include personal letters, speeches, and other types of writing from the time. By answering the questions following the document, you'll analyze each primary source the way a historian would.

**It Matters Today** shows how a person, event, or idea in every chapter is meaningful today. The questions at the end of each essay prompt you to consider specific connections between the past, the present—and the future.

**Maps** provide visual representations of how historical events and trends have impacted different regions of the United States. The captions below the maps supply information on ways to interpret what you see.

Each chapter concludes with a **Summary** that reinforces the most important themes and information in the chapter. Following the Summary, a list of Key Terms identifies the chapter's key historical study terms and includes the page where each is explained in the margin.

# About the Authors

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Born in Mobile, Alabama, Carol Berkin received her undergraduate degree from Barnard College and her Ph.D. from Columbia University. Her dissertation won the Bancroft Award. She is now Presidential Professor of history at Baruch College and the Graduate Center of City University of New York. She has written *Jonathan Sewall: Odyssey of an American Loyalist* (1974); *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (1996); *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* (2002); and *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (2005). She has edited *Women of America: A History* (with Mary Beth Norton, 1979); *Women, War and Revolution* (with Clara M. Lovett, 1980); *Women's Voices, Women's Lives: Documents in Early American History* (with Leslie Horowitz, 1998) and *Looking Forward/Looking Back: A Women's Studies Reader* (with Judith Pinch and Carole Appel, 2005). She was contributing editor on southern women for *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and has appeared in the PBS series *Liberty! The American Revolution*; *Ben Franklin*; and *Alexander Hamilton* and The History Channel's *Founding Fathers*. Professor Berkin chaired the Dunning Beveridge Prize Committee for the American Historical Association, the Columbia University Seminar in Early American History, and the Taylor Prize Committee of the Southern Association of Women Historians, and she served on the program committees for both the Society for the History of the Early American Republic and the Organization of American Historians. She has served on the Planning Committee for the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress, and chaired the CLEP Committee for Educational Testing Service. She serves on the Board of Trustees of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and The National Council for History Education.

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Born in Riverside, California, James L. Gormly received a B.A. from the University of Arizona and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut. He is now professor of history and chair of the history department at Washington and Jefferson College. He has written *The Collapse of the Grand Alliance* (1970) and *From Potsdam to the Cold War* (1979). His articles and reviews have appeared in *Diplomatic History*, *The Journal of American History*, *The American Historical Review*, *The Historian*, *The History Teacher*, and *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*.

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Wright, 2007); *Rebels, Reformers & Revolutionaries: Collected Essays and Second Thoughts* (2002); *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (1999); *Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 & 1802* (1993); and *Charles Fenton Mercer and the Trial of National Conservatism* (1989). He was script consultant and on-camera commentator for two PBS series, *Africans in America* (1998) and *This Far By Faith: Stories of African American Religion* (2003). His articles on race and politics in early America have appeared in journals, anthologies, and encyclopedias. Professor Egerton served on the dissertation prize committee for the Southern Historical Association, and the book and article prize committees for the Society of Historians of the Early Republic. He has served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of the Early Republic* and *The Historian*, and he was awarded the John Adams Chair (Netherlands) Fulbright Scholar Distinguished Lecturing Award.

### KELLY WOESTMAN

Kelly Woestman (Ph.D. University of North Texas) is professor of history and history education director at Pittsburg State University in Kansas. She has received a number of prestigious teaching and technology grants including: Teaching American History Grant from the U.S. Department of Education; and Improving Teacher Quality Grant for Assessment from Pittsburg State University. Professor Woestman is a past president of H-Net Humanities and Social Sciences Online and co-editor of *The Teaching American History Project: Lessons for Historians and History Educators* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2009).

# Making America

# Making a “New” World to 1588

## CHAPTER

I

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: *Hienwatha*

Life was getting worse for the people who lived in North America’s northeastern woodlands. For generations they had lived peacefully in their largely self-sufficient villages on the corn that the women grew and the game that the men hunted. But around six hundred years ago, a long-lasting change in the weather made corn production less dependable, and the people were forced to hunt and gather more wild foods to supplement their diets. As hunters from individual villages roamed deeper and deeper into the forests looking for food, they encountered others who, like themselves, were desperate to harvest the diminishing resources. Conflicts became common. “Everywhere there was peril and everywhere mourning,” says one version of the story. “Feuds with outer nations and feuds with brother nations, feuds of sister towns and feuds of families and clans made every warrior a stealthy man who liked to kill.”

In the midst of the crisis, a child who would be called Hienwatha (or Hiawatha, Maker of Rivers) was born among the Haudenosaunee, or Longhouse People (sometimes called Iroquois). According to some sources, Hienwatha was born among the Onondaga Nation sometime shortly after 1400 but came to live with the neighboring Mohawks. If that story is true, he may well have been a war captive, taken to replace a Mohawk killed in the ever-accelerating violence that raged through the woodlands.

Having grown to adulthood among the Mohawks, the still young and unmarried outsider left his village to seek survival on his own in the woods. Food was scarce, and Hienwatha became a cannibal, killing lone travelers to eat their flesh. One day, as Hienwatha was butchering a victim, he discovered that he had a visitor. The man, a Huron called Dekanahwideh (Two River Currents Flowing Together), shamed Hienwatha for his dishonorable state. The stranger then told him of a spirit being called Peacemaker, who had given Dekanahwideh a vision and a mission: he was to unify all the Haudenosaunee into a great and peaceful

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### *A World of Change*

American Origins

#### **IT MATTERS TODAY:** Native Americans Shape a New World

Change and Restlessness in the Atlantic World

The Complex World of Indian America

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** The Origin of the League of Peace

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** A Moroccan Visits Sub-Saharan Africa

#### *Exploiting Atlantic Opportunities*

The Portuguese, Africa, and Plantation Slavery

The Continued Quest for Asian Trade

A New Transatlantic World

#### *The Challenges of Mutual Discovery*

A Meeting of Minds in America

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Columbus Meets the Tíano

The Columbian Exchange

New Worlds in Africa and America

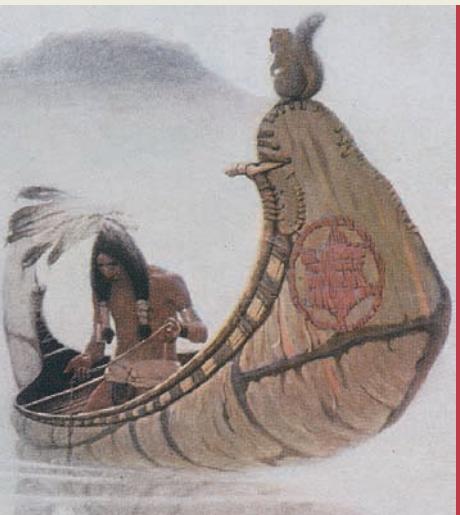
A New World in Europe

#### *Summary*

### HIENWATHA

New conditions in North America led to increasing conflicts among the five Haudenosaunee tribes during the fifteenth century. Hienwatha overcame resistance—even the murder of his family—to convince Haudenosaunee leaders to form the League of Peace, a political, military, and religious alliance that helped them survive massive changes and made them a major force in Atlantic diplomacy.

Frontispiece from *The Song of Hiawatha* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82), pub. by George G. Harrap & Company Ltd., 1911 (soft-ground etching), Wyeth, Newell Convers (1882–1945) (after)/Private Collection/The Stapleton Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library



nation. Inspired by the stranger’s words, Hienwatha vowed never to eat human flesh again and to spend his life making Dekanahwideh’s vision a reality.

Hienwatha moved back among the Mohawks, married, and began telling the people about Dekanahwideh’s vision and Peacemaker’s message. Hienwatha was determined to find a way to convince his enemies among the Haudenosaunee to accept the idea of cooperation. His solution was to weave a belt of wampum-shell strings that showed a great chain connecting the five Haudenosaunee nations—Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. Carrying his belt, Hienwatha traveled among the five nations, telling them that they could survive only if they began cooperating. He finally won over even Tadadaho, whose Onondaga Nation became the keeper of the council fires. Together, Hienwatha, Dekanahwideh, Tadadaho, and the other leaders of the Five Nations created a confederation government, the League of Peace, that Europeans later would call the League of the Iroquois. Under its provisions each member nation maintained complete sovereignty in its own affairs, but all agreed fully to defend the others, share resources, and promote the confederation’s overall welfare. They also vowed to carry forward Peacemaker’s design by offering peace to all who would agree to live with them under the Great Tree of Peace that symbolized the new covenant. Although few historians accept the popular myth that the League later served as a model for the U.S. Constitution, the alliance created the first extensive political confederation in North America.

As remarkable as Hienwatha’s story is, his experience was not entirely unique. Faced with changing conditions, natural ones at first and then those brought by invading Europeans, Indians throughout the Americas struggled valiantly and creatively to restructure their societies and their lives. Sometimes the effort brought success, as it did for the Haudenosaunee, but the new political, diplomatic, and spiritual alignments just as often triggered more struggle and war. But whatever else might be said for the achievements of Hienwatha and his contemporary visionaries, they succeeded in reshaping America, crafting what Europeans naively—but in this one sense quite correctly—called the New World. And in the process, they helped shape the entire Atlantic world, where the making of America would soon take center stage.

**F**or nearly a thousand years before the Haudenosaunee formed their league, a combination of natural and human forces truly global in scope was having a profound impact throughout the Atlantic world. For example, in 632, a vibrant new religion swept out of the Arabian Peninsula to conquer much of the Mediterranean world. Eventually Europeans, who had themselves adopted a new and dynamic religion, Christianity, only a few centuries earlier, struck back in a protracted series of Crusades designed to break Islamic power. Together these expansive societies introduced new technologies and knowledge of distant and mysterious worlds that would engender an air of restlessness throughout Europe.

One of those mysterious worlds lay to the south of the forbidding Sahara Desert in Africa. There, as in both America and Europe, people had been dealing with changing conditions by crafting societies and economies that made the most of varying environments. When Islamic trading caravans began penetrating this region in the eighth

# Chronology

<b>ca. 70,000–8,000 BCE</b>	Human migration from Asia into Beringia	<b>ca. 800–1700</b>	Rise of Mississippian culture
<b>ca. 7000 BCE</b>	Plant cultivation begins in North America	<b>1096–1291</b>	The Crusades
<b>ca. 3000 BCE</b>	Farming begins in central Mexico	<b>ca. 1200</b>	Aztecs arrive in the Valley of Mexico
<b>ca. 1400 BCE</b>	Sub-Saharan Africans perfect iron smelting	<b>ca. 1400</b>	Beginning of Little Ice Age
<b>ca. 34 CE</b>	Death of Jesus of Nazareth and beginning of Christianity	<b>ca. 1450</b>	Hienwatha and Dekanahwideh found League of Peace
<b>ca. 300 CE</b>	Farming introduced to southwest North America	<b>1492</b>	Reconquista completed; Columbus's first voyage
<b>632</b>	Death of Mohammed and beginning of Islamic expansion	<b>1500</b>	Portuguese begin to transport and trade African slaves
<b>ca. 750</b>	Islamic caravans travel to West Africa; African slave trade begins	<b>1517</b>	Martin Luther presents Ninety-five Theses
<b>ca. 800 CE</b>	Rise of Anasazi civilization	<b>1527–1535</b>	Henry VIII initiates English Reformation
<b>ca. 500–1000</b>	Rise of Hopewell culture	<b>1558</b>	Elizabeth I becomes queen of England

Note: BCE means "before the common era."

century, they found highly developed cities that could draw on populations and natural resources to produce goods that were in great demand throughout the evolving Atlantic world. Like Native Americans, Africans, too, would be drawn into the restlessness that characterized this dynamic age.

Within decades after the Five Nations united, Christopher Columbus, a Genoese navigator in Spain's employ, washed into the **Western Hemisphere** while trying to find the distant worlds known to Islamic traders. Columbus's accident brought two historical streams together, and from that point onward, the history of each helped to form the future of both. On a global scale, this event launched a new era in human history. On a more local scale, it began a process we call *Making America*.

**Western Hemisphere** When discussing the world longitudinally (lengthwise), geographers often divide the globe into two halves (hemispheres). The **Western Hemisphere** includes North America, Mexico, Central America, and South America; the **Eastern Hemisphere** includes Europe, Asia, and Africa.

## A World of Change

- ★ **How did environmental changes influence the development of various societies in North America during the millennia before the emergence of the Atlantic world?**
- ★ **What forces came into play in the centuries before 1500 that would launch Europeans on a program of outward exploration?**
- ★ **What factors in sub-Saharan African history helped lead to the development of the slave trade?**

Christopher Columbus's accidental encounter with the Western Hemisphere came after nearly a thousand years of increasing restlessness and dramatic change that affected all of the areas surrounding the Atlantic Ocean. After **millennia** of relative isolation, the natural and human environments in America were opened to the flow of people, animals, and goods from the rest of the Atlantic world. During the centuries before 1492, Christian monarchs and church leaders conducted a series of **Crusades** to wrest

**millennia** The plural of *millennium*, a period of one thousand years.

**Crusades** Military expeditions undertaken by European Christians in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims.

**Holy Land** Palestine, which now is divided into Israel, Jordan, and Syria; called the Holy Land because it is the region in which the events described in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible took place; it is sacred to Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

**Muslims** People who practice the religion of Islam, a monotheistic faith that accepts Mohammed as the chief and last prophet of God.

control of the **Holy Land** from the **Muslims**. As armies of Crusaders pushed their way into the region, they came into contact with many desirable commodities—silks, spices, and precious metals. As word spread of the finery Muslims obtained through trade with Africa and Asia, enterprising individuals began looking for ways to profit by supplying such luxuries to European consumers. Both Crusaders and explorers came into contact with equally restless and vibrant societies in Africa and the Western Hemisphere, lending greater impetus to continuing journeys.

### American Origins

American history, both before and after Columbus’s intrusion, was shaped by the peculiar landscape that had developed over millennia in the Western Hemisphere. About 2.5 million years ago, a new force came to dominate the landscape with the onset of the Great Ice Age.

During the height of the Ice Age, great sheets of ice advanced and withdrew across the world’s continents. Glaciers moved southward, grinding away at the central part of North America, carving a flat corridor all the way from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico. During the last ice advance, the Wisconsin glaciation, a sheet of ice more than 8,000 feet thick, covered the northern half of both Europe and North America.

Not only did this massive ice sheet affect the underlying geology, but so much water was frozen into the glaciers that sea levels dropped as much as 450 feet. Migratory animals found vast regions closed to them by the imposing ice fields and ventured into areas exposed by the receding sea. One such region, Beringia, lay between present-day Siberia on the Asian continent and Alaska in North America. Now covered by the waters of the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean, Beringia during the Ice Age was a dry, frigid grassland—a perfect grazing ground for animals such as giant bison and huge-tusked woolly mammoths.

Sea levels were low enough to expose Beringia about seventy thousand years ago, and the area remained above sea level more or less continually until about ten thousand years ago. Although movement southward into North America would have been difficult because of the rugged terrain and mountainous glaciers, determined migrating species may have begun populating the continent at any time between these dates.

What was true for other species may also have been true for humans. Each of the indigenous peoples who continue to occupy this hemisphere has its own account of its origins, some of which involve migration. Biological evidence suggests that the majority of Native Americans did migrate here—three distinct groups arriving seemingly at different times. The first of these groups, called the Paleo-Indians, probably entered the continent between thirty thousand and forty thousand years ago, and their descendants eventually occupied the entire area of the Western Hemisphere. The second group, collectively called the Na-Dene people, appears to have arrived very near the end of the Wisconsin era, between ten thousand and eleven thousand years ago, and their descendants are concentrated in the subarctic regions of Canada and the southwestern United States. The final group, the Arctic-dwelling Inuits, or Eskimos, arrived sometime later, perhaps after Beringia had flooded again. A great many anomalies exist regarding this process, however. Recent archaeological finds and isolated discoveries such as that of the **Kenniwick Man** suggest that many different groups of migrating or indigenous people may have coexisted over this sixty-thousand-year period.

Until about nine thousand years ago, the presence of Ice Age animals supplied human hunters with their primary source of meat and set the tempo for Paleo-Indian life. However, as temperatures warmed, these species began to die out. The hunters faced the

**Kenniwick Man** The name given to a human skeleton discovered next to the Columbia River near Kennewick, Washington, in 1996. The skeleton is believed to be over 9,000 years old and appears to have facial features unlike those of other ancient Indian relics.



# It Matters Today

## NATIVE AMERICANS SHAPE A NEW WORLD

It might be hard to imagine why understanding the original peopling of North America during the millennia before Columbus could possibly matter to how we live our lives today. Without this chapter in our history, there would likely have been no United States history at all. Fifteenth-century Europeans lacked the tools, the organization, the discipline, and the economic resources to conquer a wilderness—such a feat would be the equivalent of us establishing a successful colony on the moon today. But the environmental and genetic engineering conducted through the millennia of North American history created a hospitable environment into which European crops, animals, and people could easily

insinuate themselves. Although the descendants of those Europeans may fool themselves into thinking that they constructed an entirely new world in North America, the fact is that they simply grafted new growth onto ancient rootstock, creating the unique hybrid that is today's America.

1. Describe what you think it would take technologically, economically, and politically for the United States to establish a successful permanent colony on the moon. How would the presence of a biologically identical indigenous population change those requirements?
2. In what ways are the Indian heritages of America still visible in our society today?

unpleasant prospect of following the large animals into extinction if they kept trying to survive by hunting big game. Instead, people everywhere in North America began to explore the newly emerging local environments for new sources of food, clothing, shelter, and tools. In the forests that grew to cover the eastern half of the continent, they developed finely polished stone tools, which they used to make functional and beautiful implements out of wood, bone, shell, and other materials. There and along the Pacific shore, people used large, heavy stone tools to hollow out massive tree trunks, making boats from which they could harvest food from inland waterways and from the sea. During this time domesticated dogs were introduced into North America, probably by newly arriving migrants from Asia. With boats for river transportation and dogs to help carry loads on land, Native people were able to make the best use of their local environments by moving around to different spots as the seasons of the year changed. They followed an annual round of movement from camp to camp—perhaps collecting shellfish for several weeks at the mouth of a river, then moving on to where wild strawberries were ripening, and later in the summer relocating to fields in which maturing wild onions or sunflower seeds could be harvested.

Although these ancestors of modern Indians believed in and celebrated the animating spirits of the plants and animals on which they depended for survival, they nonetheless engaged in environmental engineering. They used fire to clear forests of unwanted scrub and to encourage the growth of berries and other plants. **Maize** (corn), along with other engineered plants like beans, squash, and chilies, formed the basis for an agricultural revolution in North America, allowing many people to settle in larger villages for longer periods. Successful adaptation—including plant cultivation and eventually agriculture—along with population growth and the constructive use of spare time allowed some Indians in North America to build large, ornate cities. The map of ancient America is dotted with such centers. Beginning about three thousand years ago, the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys became the home for a number of **mound builder** societies whose cities became trading and ceremonial centers that had enormous economic and social

**Maize** Corn; the word maize comes from an Indian word for this plant.

**mound builder** Name applied to a number of Native American societies, including the Adena, Hopewell, and Mississippian cultures, that constructed massive earthen mounds as monuments and building foundations.

outreach. Then, about eight hundred years ago, midwestern mound builder sites fell into decline, and the people who once had congregated there withdrew to separated villages or bands. No single satisfactory explanation accounts for why this happened, but it is interesting to note that other changes were taking place at around this time elsewhere in the Atlantic world that would have profound effects on the American story.

**Mohammed** Born ca. 570 into an influential family in Mecca, on the Arabian Peninsula, around 610 Mohammed began having religious visions in which he was revealed as “the Messenger of God.” The content of his various visions was recorded as the Qur'an, the sacred text that is the foundation for the Islamic religion.

**Moors** Natives of northern Africa who converted to Islam in the eighth century, becoming the major carriers of the Islamic religion and culture both to southern Africa and to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), which they conquered and occupied from the eighth century until their ouster in the late fifteenth century.

**Reconquista** The campaign undertaken by European Christians to recapture the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors.

### Change and Restlessness in the Atlantic World

During the few centuries following the death of the prophet **Mohammed** in 632, Muslim Arabs, Turks, and **Moors** made major inroads into western Asia and northern Africa, eventually encroaching on Europe's southern and eastern frontiers.

Although Europeans repulsed Islamic invasions into what is now France in 732, the newcomers introduced new technologies, food items, and knowledge, just as the Crusaders returned home with new information about distant lands. These contributions not only enriched European culture but also improved the quality of life. For example, new farming methods increased food production so much that Europe began to experience a population explosion. Soon Europeans would begin turning this new knowledge and these new tools against the people who brought them.

Iberians launched a **Reconquista**, an effort to break Islamic rule on the peninsula and, in 1096, European Christians launched the first in a series of Crusades to sweep the Muslims from the Holy Land. With the aid of English Crusaders, Portugal attained independence in 1147. In the Holy Land, Crusaders captured key points only to be expelled by Muslim counterattacks. The effort to dislodge Islamic forces from Jerusalem and other sacred sites came largely to an end in 1291, but the struggle continued in the Iberian Peninsula. By 1380, Portugal's King John I had united that country's various principalities under his rule. In Spain, unification took much longer, but in 1469 **Ferdinand and Isabella**, heirs to the rival thrones of Aragon and Castile, married and forged a united Spanish state. Twenty-three years later, in 1492, the Spanish subdued the last Moorish stronghold on the peninsula, completing the Reconquista.

Consolidation began in France in around 1480, when Louis XI took control of five rival provinces to create a unified kingdom. Five years later in England, Henry Tudor and the House of Lancaster defeated the rival House of York in the Wars of the Roses, ending nearly a hundred years of civil war. Tudor, now styling himself King Henry VII, cemented this victory by marrying into the rival house, wedding Elizabeth of York to unify the English throne. As in Spain and Portugal, the formation of unified states in France and England opened the way to new, expansive activity that would accelerate the creation of an Atlantic world.

### The Complex World of Indian America

The world into which Europeans would intrude was not some static realm stuck in the Stone Age. Native American societies were every bit as progressive, adaptable, and historically dynamic as those that would invade their homes. In fact,

adaptive flexibility characterized Indian life throughout North America, and so the vast variety in environmental conditions that characterized the continent led to the emergence of enormous differences between various Indian groups. **Anthropologists** have tried to make the extremely complicated cultural map of North America understandable by dividing the continent into a series of culture areas—regions where the similarities among native societies were greater than the differences. Map 1.1 shows eleven such areas: Arctic, Subarctic, Northwest Coast, Plateau, California, Great Basin, Southwest, Great Plains, Eastern Woodlands, Southeast, and Mexico Middle-America.

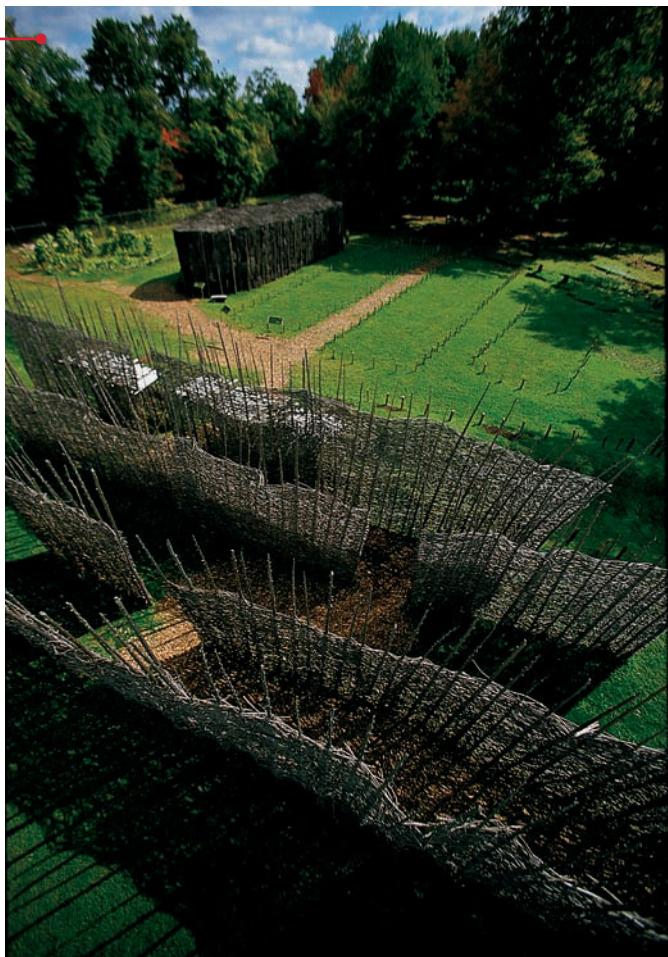
**anthropologists** Scholars who study human behavior and culture in the past or the present.



**MAP I.1 Indian Culture Areas in North America**

Social scientists who study Native American societies have divided them into a complex of "culture areas": regions in which cultural similarities outnumber differences between resident groups. Although there is some disagreement among scholars about the exact number and extent of specific areas, this map provides a representative view of the various culture areas in North America.

Haudenosaunee towns consisted of rows of longhouses, often surrounded by defensive walls. This partial reconstruction of a sixteenth-century Haudenosaunee town that stood near what is now London, Ontario, illustrates how such sites looked. The staked areas to the right of the rebuilt longhouses show where neighboring longhouses used to stand. Richard Alexander Cooke III.



In the southeastern region of North America, peoples speaking Siouan, Caddoan, and Muskogean languages formed vibrant agricultural and urban societies that had ties with exchange centers farther north as well as with adventurous traders from Mexico. At places like Natchez, fortified cities housed gigantic pyramids, and farmland radiating outward provided food for large residential populations. These were true cities and, like their counterparts in Europe and Asia, they were magnets attracting ideas, technologies, and religious notions from the entire hemisphere.

Farther north, in the region called the Eastern Woodlands, people lived in smaller villages and combined agriculture with hunting and gathering. The Haudenosaunee, for example, lived in towns numbering three thousand or more people, changing locations only as soil fertility was lost and game became exhausted. Before Hiawatha and the formation of the League of Peace, each village was largely self-governed by clan mothers and their chosen male civil servants. Each town was made up of a group of **longhouses**, structures often 60 feet or more in length.

Tradition dictated that men and women occupied different spheres of existence. The women’s world was the world of plants, healing, and nurturing. The men’s was the world of animals, hunting, and war. By late **pre-Columbian** times, the Haudenosaunee had become strongly agricultural, and because plants were in the women’s sphere, women occupied places of high social and economic status in Haudenosaunee society. Families

**longhouses** Communal dwellings, usually built of poles and bark and having a central hallway with family apartments on either side (see illustration).

**pre-Columbian** Existing in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus.

# Investigating America

## The Origin of the League of Peace

Pressed on all sides by radically changing conditions, five Indian nations among the Iroquoian-speaking peoples in the Eastern Woodlands embraced the message of Dekanahwideh. According to Hienwatha, parts of the message include the following:

.....  
I am Dekanawidah and with the Five Nations' Confederate Lords I plant the Tree of Great Peace. I plant it in your territory, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Firekeepers.

I, Dekanawidah, appoint the Mohawk Lords the heads and the leaders of the Five Nations Confederacy. The Mohawk Lords are the foundation of the Great Peace and it shall, therefore, be against the Great Binding Law to pass measures in the Confederate Council after the Mohawk Lords have protested against them.

No council of the Confederate Lords shall be legal unless all the Mohawk Lords are present.

Rights of the People of the Five Nations: Whenever a specially important matter or a great emergency is presented before the Confederate Council and the nature of the matter affects the entire body of the Five Nations, threatening their utter ruin, then the Lords of the Confederacy must submit the matter to the decision of their people and the decision of the people shall affect the decision of the Confederate Council. This decision shall be a confirmation of the voice of the people.

The men of every clan of the Five Nations shall have a Council Fire ever burning in readiness for a council of the

clan. When it seems necessary for a council to be held to discuss the welfare of the clans, then the men may gather about the fire. This council shall have the same rights as the council of the women.

When the Confederate Council of the Five Nations has for its object the establishment of the Great Peace among the people of an outside nation and that nation refuses to accept the Great Peace, then by such refusal they bring a declaration of war upon themselves from the Five Nations. Then shall the Five Nations seek to establish the Great Peace by a conquest of the rebellious nation.

- .....
- Clearly, Dekanahwideh chose the image of the "great tree" for a reason. What do you see as the meaning behind this image? What do you think the four "great, long, white roots" symbolize?
  - What does the Great Law suggest about the responsibility of each of the Five Nations to the confederacy as a whole?
  - How would the scheme advocated here help the Haudenosaunee deal with changing historical conditions?
  - Among whites, the law was first mentioned by missionaries in the mid-eighteenth century, and it was not written down in English until a century after that. What problems do oral traditions raise as primary sources? Are any sources, oral or written, ever truly objective?

were matrilineal, meaning that they traced their descent through the mother's line, and matrilocal, meaning that a man left his home to move in with his wife's family upon marriage. Women distributed the rights to cultivate specific fields and controlled the harvest. Variations on this pattern were typical throughout the Eastern Woodlands and in the neighboring Great Plains and Southwest.

For most of the people who inhabited the eastern edge of North America, political life was decentralized, with a tribal council and a sachem—later known to whites as a "chief"—who governed by consensus. Rarely did larger confederations make decisions above the local level. The few exceptions included the Tsenacommacah (or Powhatan) Confederation the English settlers would encounter in Jamestown, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy described in the Hienwatha chronicle, which was organized on the shores of Onondaga Lake around 1450 and ultimately stretched from southern Canada



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

through New York into Pennsylvania. According to tradition, the possibly mythical Peacegiver presented a plan for government, often referred to as “The Great Law.” Remembered by sachems and passed down from generation to generation, the Great Law grew to include 116 paragraphs that governed both tribal and personal behavior.

In the Southwest, groups with strong ties to Mexico began growing corn as early as 3,200 years ago, but they continued to follow a migratory life until about 400, when they began building larger and more substantial houses and limiting their migrations. The greatest change, however, came during the eighth century, when a shift in climate made the region drier and a pattern of late-summer thunderstorms triggered dangerous and erosive flash floods.

There seem to have been two quite different responses to this change in climate. A group called the Anasazi expanded their agricultural ways, cooperating to build flood-control dams and irrigation canals. The need for cooperative labor meant forming larger communities, and between about 900 and 1300, the Anasazi built whole cities of multi-story apartment houses along the high cliffs, safe from flooding but near their irrigated fields. In these densely populated towns, Anasazi craft specialists such as potters, weavers, basket makers, and tool smiths manufactured goods for the community while farmers tended fields and priests attended to the spiritual needs of the society.

Other major changes occurred in the Southwest after 1300. During the last quarter of the thirteenth century, a long string of summer droughts and bitterly cold winters forced the Anasazi to abandon their cities. They disappeared as a people, splitting into smaller communities that eventually became the various Pueblo groups. At the same time, an entirely new population of hunter-gatherers entered the region, bringing new technologies, including the bow and arrow, into the Southwest. About half of them continued to be hunter-gatherers, while the rest borrowed cultivating and home-building techniques from the Pueblos. Europeans who later entered the area called the hunter-gatherers Apaches and the settled agriculturalists Navajos.

Agriculture was practiced only marginally, if at all, in other regions. In areas like the Great Basin, desert conditions made agriculture too risky, and in California, the Northwest Coast, and the intermountain Plateau (see Map 1.1), the bounty of available wild foods made it unnecessary. In these regions, hunting and gathering remained the chief occupations. For example, the Nez Percés and their neighbors living in the Plateau region occupied permanent village sites in the winter but did not stay together in a single group all year. Rather, they formed task groups—temporary villages that came together to share the labor required to harvest a particular resource—and then went their separate ways when they completed the task. These task groups brought together not only people who lived in different winter villages but often people from different tribes and even different language groups. In such groups, political authority passed among those who were best qualified to supervise particular activities. If the task group was hunting, the best and most senior hunters—almost always men—exercised political authority. If the task group was gathering roots, then the best and most senior diggers—almost always women—ruled. Thus among such hunting-gathering people, political organization changed from season to season, and social status depended on what activities were most important to the group at a particular time.

As these examples illustrate, variations in daily life and social arrangements in pre-Columbian North America reflected variations in climate, soil conditions, food supplies, and cultural heritages from place to place across the vast continent. But despite the enormous size of the continent and the amazing variety of cultures spread across it, economic and social connections within and between ecological regions tied the people

together in complex ways. For example, varieties of shell found only along the Northwest Pacific Coast passed from hand to hand over thousands of miles of social and physical space to settlements as far away as Florida.

### A World of Change in Africa

Like North America, Africa was home to an array of societies that developed in response to varying natural and historical conditions. But unlike contemporary Indian groups, Africans maintained continual, if perhaps only sporadic, contacts with societies in Europe and Asia, societies to which they had at one time been intimately linked.

Tendrils of trade between the Mediterranean and **sub-Saharan Africa** can be traced back to ancient Egypt and before, but the creation of the Sahara Desert, the product of a 1,500-year-long drought that began about 4,500 years ago, cut most of Africa off from the fertile areas of the Mediterranean coast. The people living south of the new desert were forced largely to reinvent civilization in response to changing conditions. They abandoned the wheat and other grain crops that had predominated in earlier economies, domesticating new staples such as **millet** and native strains of rice. They also abandoned the cattle and horses that had been common in earlier times, adopting sheep and goats, which were better suited to arid environments. Depending on immediate conditions, groups could establish large villages and live on a balance of vegetables, meat, and milk or, if necessary, shift over to a purely nomadic lifestyle following their herds.

Social organization tended to follow a similar adaptive strategy. The entire region was dominated by a single group of people, speakers of closely related dialects of the common Bantu language (see Map 1.2). Among these Bantu descendants and their neighbors, the social structure was based on the belief that large subgroups were descended from a common **fictive ancestor**. These larger organizations were then subdivided into smaller and smaller groups, each independent—as a modern nuclear family might be—but tied through an elaborate family tree to hundreds or even thousands of other similar groups.

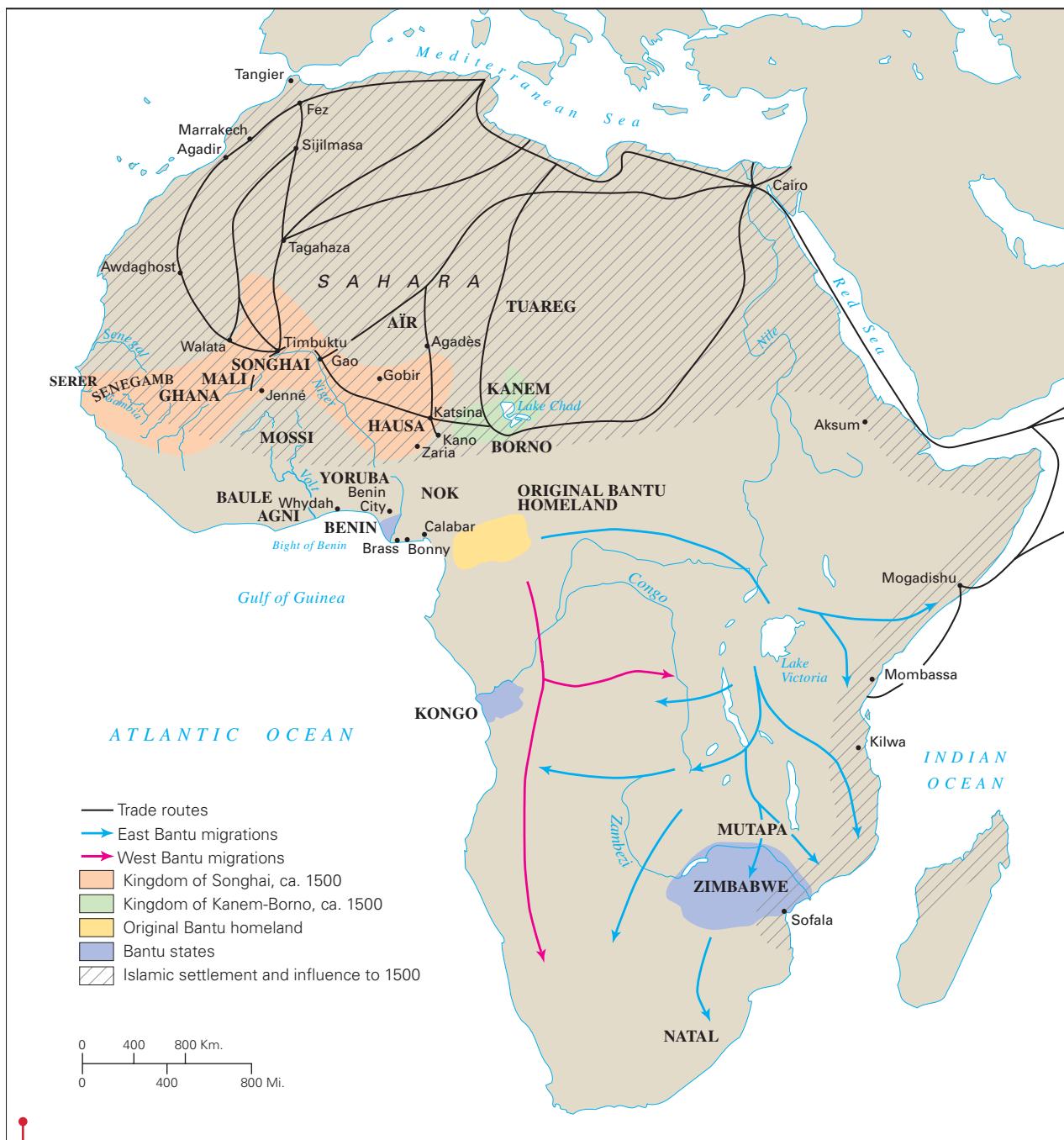
The status of each group was determined by seniority in the line of descent—those descended from the oldest offspring of the common ancestor were socially and politically superior to those descended from younger branches. This fundamental hierarchy created an organizational structure that permitted large-group cooperation and management when appropriate, but also permitted each small band to function independently when conditions required. Within each group, seniority also determined political and social status: the eldest descendant of the common ancestor within each group held superior power, whereas those on the lowest branch of the family tree were treated more or less as slaves.

Much of the technology in place in sub-Saharan Africa can be traced to common roots that preceded the formation of the desert. Evidence suggests that pottery and simple metallurgy were part of an ancient pan-African technological tradition. However, sometime between two and three thousand years ago, sub-Saharan groups appear to have discovered iron smelting. Craftsmen invented a furnace shaped like a long tube that permitted both the high heat and the air draft necessary for melting iron ore, thus making use of abundant raw iron deposits common in southern Africa to produce tools, vessels, and weapons. This discovery may, in fact, have aided the Bantu-speakers in their extensive expansion throughout most of the continent. It certainly gave African groups an edge in carving settlements out of the jungles and grasslands. Often, large cities with elaborate social hierarchies grew in neighborhoods where iron and other ores were

**sub-Saharan Africa** The region of Africa south of the Sahara Desert.

**millet** A large family of grain grasses that produce nutritious, carbohydrate-rich seeds used for both human and animal feed.

**fictive ancestor** A mythical figure believed by a social group to be its founder and from whom all members are believed to be biologically descended.



**MAP 1.2** Sub-Saharan Africa Before Sustained European Contact

During the many centuries that followed the formation of the Sahara Desert, Bantu people expanded throughout the southern half of Africa. They and other groups established a number of powerful kingdoms whose capitals served as major trading centers among these kingdoms and for Islamic traders, who finally penetrated the desert after the year 750.

# Investigating America

## A Moroccan Visits Sub-Saharan Africa

Ibn Battuta was 22 years old when he left his home in coastal Tangiers in 1325 for an extended trip to the Middle East and the great kingdoms of Sub-Saharan Africa. The young Muslim—a near contemporary of fellow traveler Marco Polo—made a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, the burial place of the prophet Mohammad, but then crossed the desert in a traders' caravan. The following is from his account of the trip.

.....

“I reached the city of Mali, the capital of the king of the blacks. I stopped at the cemetery and went to the quarter occupied by the whites, where I asked for Muhammad ibn al-Faqih. I found that he had hired a house for me and went there. His son-in-law brought me candles and food, and next day Ibn al-Faqih himself came to visit me, with other prominent residents. I met the qadi of Malli, ‘Abd ar-Rahman, who came to see me; he is a negro, a pilgrim, and a man of fine character. I met also the interpreter Dugha, who is one of the principal men among the blacks. All these persons sent me hospitality-gifts of food and treated me with the utmost generosity—may God reward them for their kindnesses!

The sultan of Mali is Mansa Sulayman, “mansa” meaning [in Mandingo] sultan, and Sulayman being his proper name. He is a miserly king, not a man from whom one might hope for a rich present. It happened that I spent these two months without seeing him, on account of my illness. Later on he held a banquet in commemoration of our master [the late sultan of Morocco] Abu'l-Hasan, to which the commanders, doctors, qadi and preacher were invited, and I went along

particularly abundant. These would then become centers for trade as well as political hubs—the seeds from which later kingdoms and empires would sprout.

These trading centers became particularly important when Islamic expansion brought new, outside sources for trade into the sub-Saharan world. The first mention of trade between Islamic adventurers and African communities stems from the eighth century, and it seems to have developed slowly over the next several hundred years. One catalyst to the trade growth was the introduction of the camel as a draft animal. Native to Asia and the Arabian Peninsula, camels were ideally suited for crossing the inhospitable desert, making it possible to establish regular caravan routes that linked sub-Saharan trading centers with the outside world. Increasingly after 1100, metal goods—iron, gold, and precious gems—and slaves were carried across the desert by Arab, Berber, and other

with them. Reading-desks were brought in, and the Koran was read through, then they prayed for our master Abu'l-Hasan and also for Mansa Sulayman.

The negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king and the most abject in their behaviour before him. They swear by his name, saying ‘Mansa Sulayman ki’ [in Mandingo, ‘the emperor Sulayman has commanded’]. If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on worn garments, removes his turban and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection and knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back listening to what he says. If the sultan delivers any remarks during his audience, those present take off their turbans and put them down, and listen in silence to what he says.”

- .....
- Ibn Battuta's Moroccan family was light-skinned Berbers, the descendants of the Arab Muslims who conquered North Africa shortly after the death of Muhammad. How did he regard the people of Mali?
  - Why did Battuta, like Columbus after him, describe skin color? As with the Great Law of the Haudenosaunee, this document presents problems for the historian.
  - How did the language barrier affect his perceptions? Battuta wrote in Arabic. How might later English translations of this document pose even greater obstacles to an understanding of the past?



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

Muslim traders, who gave African middlemen silks, spices, and other foreign goods in exchange. This trade tended to enhance the power of African elites, leading to ever larger and more elaborate states.

## Exploiting Atlantic Opportunities

- ★ **How did various groups of Europeans seek to exploit opportunities that arose from new discoveries leading up to and following 1492?**
- ★ **Why did Columbus’s entry into the Western Hemisphere prove to be a major turning point in the development of the Atlantic world?**
- ★ **How did Native Americans and Africans respond initially to European expansion?**

Dynamic forces in America, Europe, Africa, and beyond seemed unavoidably to be drawing the disparate societies that occupied the Atlantic shore into a complex world of mutual experience. But this process was not automatic. Enterprising people throughout the globe seized opportunities created by the spirit of restlessness and the merging of historical streams, advancing the process and giving it peculiar shape. Those who sought to exploit the emerging new world, while generally seeking profits for themselves and advancement for their own nations, tribes, or classes, nonetheless had enormous impact on the lives of all who occupied it. The process of outreach and historical evolution that helped to launch the American experience grew directly from these efforts at exploitation.

### The Portuguese, Africa, and Plantation Slavery

The first of the European states to pull itself together was also the first to challenge Islamic dominance in both the Asian and African trade. Portugal’s John I encouraged exploration by establishing a school of navigation on his king-

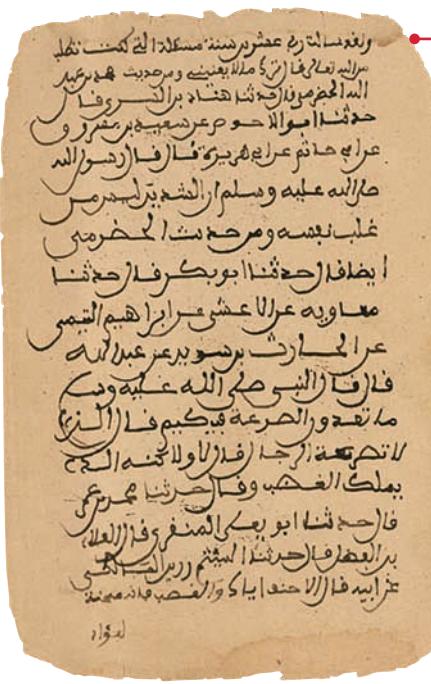
dom’s southwestern shore. Under the directorship of John’s son, **Henry the Navigator**, the school sent numerous expeditions in search of new sources of wealth. By the 1430s, the Portuguese had discovered and taken control of islands off the western shore of Africa, and within thirty years Prince Henry’s protégés had pushed their way to Africa itself, opening relations with the Songhai Empire.

The **Songhai Empire** was typical of the sub-Saharan trading states that emerged through Muslim contacts (see Map 1.2). As was common in the region, the Songhai state consisted of numerous smaller societies, all related through a common ancestor and organized along hierarchical lines. Society remained largely village based, with slaves at the bottom, skilled craftsmen in the middle, and a small noble class at the top. These nobles assembled in Timbuktu, a trading hub and the Songhai capital, which became a cosmopolitan center where African and Islamic influences met. Its art, architecture, and the accomplishments of its scholars impressed all who ventured there. From Timbuktu, Songhai traders shipped valuable trade goods across the Sahara by means of caravans. The Portuguese, however, offered speedier shipment and higher profits by carrying trade goods directly to Europe by sea.

By the end of the fifteenth century, Portuguese navigators had gained control over the flow of prized items such as gold, ivory, and spices out of West Africa, and Portuguese colonizers were growing sugar and other crops on the newly conquered Azores and Canary Islands. From the beginning of the sixteenth century onward, the Portuguese also became increasingly involved in slave trafficking, at first to their own plantations and then to Europe itself. By 1550, Portuguese ships were carrying African slaves throughout the world.

**Henry the Navigator** Prince who founded an observatory and school of navigation and directed voyages that helped build Portugal’s colonial empire.

**Songhai Empire** A large empire in West Africa whose capital was Timbuktu; its rulers accepted Islam around the year 1000.



During the years before European penetration into the region, western Africa became a center for Islamic culture. Islamic scholars congregated at holy sites like the Sankoré Mosque in Timbuktu (left). Here they discussed Islamic law and wrote scholarly treatises like Sayyid al-Mukhtur ibn Ahmed ibn Abi Bakr al-Kunti al-Kabir's "An Argument for Peace," which emphasized the Qur'an's message of peace and harmony (right). Writings like these not only helped win more Africans over to Islam but also influenced Qur'anic scholarship throughout the expanding Muslim world.

Left: Photo © www.danheller.com; right: Mamma Haidara Commemorative Library, Timbuktu, Mali.

### The Continued Quest for Asian Trade

Despite this, the Portuguese continued to venture eastward. In 1487, Bartolomeu Dias became the first European to reach the **Cape of Good Hope** at the southern tip of Africa. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama sailed around the cape and launched the Portuguese exploration of eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean.

By the end of the fifteenth century, England, Spain, and France were vying with Portugal to find the shortest, cheapest, and safest sea route between Europe and Asia. Because of its early head start, Portugal remained fairly cautious in its explorations, hugging the coast around Africa before crossing the ocean to India. As latecomers, Spain and England could not afford to take such a conservative approach to exploration. Voyagers from those countries took advantage of technologies borrowed from China and the Arab world to expand their horizons. From China, Europeans acquired the magnetic compass, which allowed mariners to know roughly in what direction they were sailing, even when out of sight of land. The **astrolabe**, an Arab invention that allowed seafarers to calculate the positions of heavenly bodies, also reduced the uncertainty of navigation. These inventions—together with improvements in steering mechanisms and hull design that improved a captain's control over his ship's direction, speed, and stability—made voyages much less risky.

Eager to capitalize on the new technology and knowledge, **Christopher Columbus**, an ambitious sailor from the Italian port city of Genoa, approached John II of Portugal in 1484 and asked him to support a voyage westward from Portugal, across the Atlantic, to the East Indies. The king refused when his geographers warned that Columbus had underestimated the distance. Undeterred, Columbus peddled his idea to various European governments over the next several years but found no one willing to take the risk. Finally, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella's defeat of the Moors provided Columbus with an opportunity.

The Spanish monarchs had just thrown off Islamic rule in the coastal province of Granada and were eager to break into overseas trading, dominated in the east by the

**Cape of Good Hope** A point of land projecting into the Atlantic Ocean at the southern tip of Africa; to trade with Asia, European mariners had to sail around the cape to pass from the South Atlantic into the Indian Ocean.

**astrolabe** An instrument for measuring the position of the sun and stars; using these readings, navigators could calculate their latitude—their distance north or south of the equator.

**Christopher Columbus** (Cristoforo Colombo) Italian explorer in the service of Spain who attempted to reach Asia by sailing west from Europe, thereby arriving in America in 1492.

**Bahamas** A group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, east of Florida and Cuba.

**John Cabot** (Giovanni Caboto) Italian explorer who led the English expedition that sailed along the North American mainland in 1497.

**Amerigo Vespucci** Italian explorer of the South American coast; Europeans named America after him.

**New World** A term that Europeans used during the period of early contact and colonization to refer to the Americas, especially in the context of their discovery and colonization.

**Northwest Passage** The rumored and much-hoped-for water route from Europe to Asia by way of North America was sought by early explorers.

**Jacques Cartier** French explorer who, by navigating the St. Lawrence River in 1534, gave France its primary claim to territories in the New World.

Arabs and in the south and west by the Portuguese. Ferdinand and Isabella agreed to equip three ships in exchange for a short, safe route to the Orient. On August 3, 1492, Columbus and some ninety sailors departed on the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María* for the uncharted waters of the Atlantic. More than three months later, they finally made landfall. Columbus thought he had arrived at the East Indies but, in fact, he had reached the islands we now call the **Bahamas**.

Over the next ten weeks, Columbus explored the mysteries of the Caribbean, making landfalls on the islands now known as Cuba and Hispaniola. He collected spices, coconuts, bits of gold, and some native captives. He described the natives as “a loving people” who, he thought, would make excellent servants. Columbus then returned to Spain, where he was welcomed with great celebration and rewarded with backing for three more voyages. Over the next several years, the Spanish gained a permanent foothold in the region that Columbus had discovered and became aware that the area was a world entirely new to them.

England, like Spain, was jealous of Portugal’s trade monopoly and, in 1497, Henry VII commissioned another Italian mariner, Giovanni Caboto, to search for a sea route to India. **John Cabot**, as the English called him, succeeded in crossing the North Atlantic. Shortly thereafter, another Italian, **Amerigo Vespucci**, sailing under the Spanish flag, sighted the northeastern shore of South America and sailed northward into the Caribbean in search of a passage to the East. Finally, in 1524, Giovanni da Verrazano, sailing for France, explored the Atlantic coast of North America, charting the coastline of what later became the English mainland colonies.

### A New Transatlantic World

At first, European monarchs greeted the discovery of a new world as bad news: they wanted access to the riches of Asia, not contact with some undiscovered place. As knowledge of the **New World** spread, the primary goal of exploration became finding a route around or through it—the fabled **Northwest Passage**. But gradually Europeans learned that the new land had attractions of its own.

Ambitious adventurers from Britain, France, and Iberia began exploring the fertile fishing grounds off the northern shores of North America. By 1506, such voyages became so commonplace and so profitable that the king of Portugal placed a 10 percent tax on fish imported from North America in an effort to harness this new source of wealth. But these voyages did more than feed the European imagination and the continent’s appetite for seafood. It appears that these fishermen established temporary camps along the shores of North America to provide land support for their enterprises. Gradually, as the Native Americans and the fishermen came to know each other, they began to exchange goods. Europeans, even relatively poor fishermen, had many things that the Indians lacked: copper pots, knives, jewelry, woolen blankets, and hundreds of other novelties. For their part, the Indians provided firewood, food, ivory, and furs. Apparently the trade grew quickly. By 1534, when **Jacques Cartier** made the first official exploration of the Canadian coast for the French government, he was approached by party after party of Indians offering to trade furs for the goods he carried. He could only conclude that many other Europeans had come before him.

The presence of explorers such as Verrazano and Cartier and of unknown numbers of anonymous fishermen and part-time traders had several effects on the native population. The Micmacs, Hurons, and other northeastern Indian groups approached the invading Europeans in friendship, eager to trade and to learn more about the strangers. In part this response was a sign of natural curiosity, but it also reflected some serious changes taking place in the native world of North America.

The onset of the Little Ice Age had far-reaching effects. As the climate grew colder, hunter-gatherers in the subarctic responded by withdrawing farther south, where they began to encroach on Algonquin and Iroquoian Indians. Meanwhile, the deteriorating climate made it more difficult for groups like the Haudenosaunee to depend on their corn crops for food. Forced to rely more on hunting and gathering, the Haudenosaunee had to expand their territory, and in doing so they came into conflict with their neighbors. As warfare became more common, groups increasingly formed alliances for mutual defense—systems like the Haudenosaunee League. And Indians found it beneficial to welcome European newcomers into their midst—as trading partners bearing new tools, as allies in the evolving conflicts with neighboring Indian groups, and as powerful magicians whose **shamans** might provide explanations and remedies for the hard times that had befallen them.

## The Challenges of Mutual Discovery

- ★ **How did Native Americans respond to increasing contact with European explorers and settlers?**
- ★ **In what ways did Europeans seek to incorporate Africans and Native Americans into their world of understanding?**
- ★ **In what ways was the world made different through the process called the Columbian Exchange?**

Europeans approached the New World with certain ideas in mind and defined what they found there in terms that reflected what they already believed. American Indians approached Europeans in the same way. Both of these groups—as well as Africans—were thrown into a new world of understanding that challenged many of their fundamental assumptions. They also exchanged material goods that affected their physical well-being profoundly.

### A Meeting of Minds in America

Most Europeans had a firm sense of how the world was arranged, who occupied it, and how they had come to be where they were. The existence of America—and even more the presence there of American Indians—challenged that secure knowledge.

In the first stages of mutual discovery in America, most Europeans were content mentally to reshape what they found in the New World to fit with what they expected to find. Columbus expected to find India and Indians, and he believed that was precisely what he had found. Other Europeans understood that America was a new land and that the Indians were a new people, but they attempted to fit both into the cosmic map outlined in the Bible.

Columbus's initial comments about the American Indians set the tone for many future encounters. "Of anything that they possess, if it be asked of them, they never say no," Columbus wrote; "on the contrary, they invite you to share it and show as much love as if their hearts went with it." Such writings were widely circulated in Europe and led to a perception of the Indians as noble savages, men and women free from the temptations and vanities of modern civilization.

Not all Europeans held this view of American Indians. Amerigo Vespucci, for one, found them less than noble. "They marry as many wives as they please," he explained. "The son cohabits with mother, brother with sister, male cousin with female, and any man with the first woman he meets....Beyond the fact that they have no church, no

**shamans** People who act as a link between the visible material world and an invisible spirit world; a shaman's duties include healing, conducting religious ceremonies, and foretelling the future.

# Investigating America

## Columbus Meets the Tíano

The commercial nature of Columbus's expedition helps explain his initial reaction to the people he encountered on the island they called Guanahani. His description of the island's inhabitants includes not merely their appearance but their potential as trading partners. Columbus was primarily in search of gold, but he also asked the Tíano where he could find slaves. Columbus, a former resident of Madeira when captive Portuguese and African slaves were imported to plant sugar for European markets, was as interested in laborers as he was in trading partners. The following excerpt is from one of his letters to the Spanish monarchs.

.....

**A**s I saw that they were very friendly to us, and perceived that they could be much more easily converted to our holy faith by gentle means than by force, I presented them with some red caps, and strings of beads to wear upon the neck, and many other trifles of small value, wherewith they were much delighted, and became wonderfully attached to us. Afterwards they came swimming to the ships' boats, bringing parrots, balls of cotton thread, spears and many other things which they exchanged for articles we gave them, such as glass beads, and hawks' bells; which trade was carried on with the utmost good will. But they seemed on the whole to me, to be a very poor people. They all go completely naked, even the women, though I saw but one girl. All whom I saw were young, not above thirty years of age, well made, with fine shapes and faces; their hair short, and coarse like that of a horse's tail, combed toward the forehead, except a small portion which they suffer to hang down behind, and never cut. Some paint themselves with black, which makes them appear like those of the Canaries [islands], neither black nor white; others with white, others with red, and others with such colors as they can find. Some paint the face, and some

the whole body; others only the eyes, and others the nose. Weapons they have none, nor are acquainted with them, for I showed them swords which they grasped by the blades, and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are certain reeds, without iron, though some have fish-bones or other things at the ends. They are all of a good size and stature, and handsomely formed. I saw some with scars of wounds upon their bodies, and demanded by signs the cause of them; they answered me in the same way, that there came people from the other islands in the neighborhood who endeavored to make prisoners of them, and they defended themselves. I thought then, and still believe, that these were from the continent. It appears to me, that the people are ingenious, and would be good servants and I am of opinion that they would very readily become Christians, as they appear to have no religion. They very quickly learn such words as are spoken to them. If it please our Lord, I intend at my return to carry home six of them to your Highnesses, that they may learn our language. I saw no beasts in the island, nor any sort of animals except parrots.

.....

- Why did Columbus's cultural perceptions lead him to believe that the Tíano would easily or willingly adopt Christianity?
- What evidence is there that people living in the Caribbean were not as impoverished as he reported? Why did he believe them to be poor?
- His report was written for Ferdinand and Isabella, who hoped to hear of precious metals and eastern spices. Still, given the Tíanos' lack of iron, solid build, and alleged pacifism, why might Spain be pleased with this report?

 See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**idolaters** A person who practices *idolatry*—idol worship—a practice forbidden in the Judeo-Christian and Muslim traditions.

religion and are not **idolaters**, what more can I say?" Much more, actually. Vespucci reported that the Indians practiced cannibalism and prostitution and decorated themselves in gaudy and "monstrous" ways.

In some ways, the arrival of Europeans may have been easier for American Indians to understand and explain than the existence of American Indians was for the Europeans. To Indians, the world was alive, animated by a spiritual force that was both universal and intelligent. This force took on many forms. Some of these forms were visible in the everyday world of experience, some were visible only at special times, and some

were never visible. Social ties based on fictive kinship and **reciprocal trade** linked all creatures—human and nonhuman—together into a common cosmos. These connections were chronicled in myth and were maintained through ritual, which often involved the exchange of ceremonial items believed to have spiritual value. Such objects included quartz and volcanic-glass crystals, copper, mica, shells, and other rare and light-reflecting objects. In the pre-Columbian trading world, such prized goods passed from society to society, establishing a spiritual bond between the initial givers and the eventual receivers, even though the two groups might never meet.

Europeans and European goods slipped easily into this ceremonial trading system. The trade items that the Europeans generally offered to American Indians on first contact—glass beads, mirrors, brass bells—resembled closely the items that the Indians traditionally used to establish friendly spiritual and economic relations with strangers. The perceived similarity of the trade goods offered by the Europeans led Indians to accept the newcomers as simply another new group in the complex social cosmos uniting the spiritual and material worlds.

On the other hand, Europeans perceived such items as worthless trinkets, valuing instead Indian furs and Indian land. This difference in perception became a major source of misunderstanding and conflict. To the Indians, neither the furs nor the land was of much value because by their understanding, they did not “own” either. According to their beliefs, all things had innate spirits and belonged to themselves. Thus passing animal pelts along to Europeans was simply extending the social connection that had brought the furs into Indian hands in the first place. Similarly, according to Indian belief, people could not own land: the land was seen as a living being—a mother—who feeds, clothes, and houses people as long as she receives proper respect. The idea of buying or selling land was unthinkable to Indians. When Europeans offered spiritually significant objects in exchange for land on which to build, farm, or hunt, Indians perceived the offer as an effort to join an already existing relationship, and not as a contract transferring ownership.

### The Columbian Exchange

Even though Europeans and American Indians saw some similarities in each other, their worlds differed greatly, sometimes in ways hidden to both groups. The natural environments of these worlds were different, and the passage of people, plants, and animals among Europe, Africa, and North America wrought profound changes in all three continents. Historians call this process the **Columbian Exchange**.

Perhaps the most tragic trade among the three continents came about as the direct and unavoidable consequence of human contact. During the period leading up to the age of exploration, many Europeans lost their lives to epidemic diseases. The Black Death of the fourteenth century, for example, wiped out over a third of Europe’s population. Exposure to smallpox, measles, typhus, and other serious diseases often had devastating results, but Europeans gradually developed resistance to infection. In contrast, the Indian peoples whom Columbus and other European explorers encountered lived in an environment in which contagious diseases were never a serious threat until the Europeans arrived. They had no **acquired immunity** to the various bacteria and viruses that Europeans carried. As a result, the new diseases spread very rapidly and were much more deadly among the native peoples than they were among Europeans.

Controversy rages over the number of Indians killed by imported European diseases. Estimates of how many people lived in America north of Mexico in 1492 run from a high of 25 million to a low of 1 million. At the moment, most scholars accept a range of 3 to

**reciprocal trade** A system of trading in which the objective is equal exchange of commodities rather than profit.

**Columbian Exchange** The exchange of people, plants, and animals among Europe, Africa, and North America that occurred after Columbus’s arrival in the New World.

**acquired immunity** Resistance or partial resistance to a disease; acquired immunity develops in a population over time as a result of exposure to harmful bacteria or viruses.

10 million. Even if the most conservative estimate is correct, the raw numbers of people who died of smallpox, typhus, measles, and other imported diseases were enormous. In areas of early and continuing association between Europeans and Indians, between 90 and 95 percent of the native population appear to have died of disease during the first century of contact. Although the percentage was probably lower in areas where contact was infrequent and where native populations were sparse, disease took a terrible toll as it followed the lines of kinship and trade that held native North America together.

Disease, however, did not flow in only one direction. Some diseases that originated in Africa found their way to both North America and Europe and at least one, **syphilis**, may have originated in the Western Hemisphere and migrated eastward. American Indians appear to have been less debilitated physically by syphilis, to which they may have possessed partial immunity. Africans were largely unaffected by various **malarial** fevers that ravaged both European and native populations. Europeans found measles to be a mildly unpleasant childhood disease, but it was a mass killer for both Africans and Indians. The march of exchanged diseases across the North American landscape and their effects on various populations provided a constant backdrop for the continent’s and for global history.

Less immediate but perhaps equally extreme ecological effects arose from the passage of plants among Europe, North America, and Africa. The introduction of plants into the New World extended a process that had been taking place for centuries in the Old World. Trade with Asia had carried exotic plants such as bananas, sugar cane, and rice into Africa as early as 2,300 years ago. From Africa, these plants were imported to Iberian-claimed islands such as the Canaries and eventually to America, where, along with cotton, indigo, coffee, and other imports, they would become **cash crops** on European-controlled plantations. Grains such as wheat, barley, and millet were readily transplanted to some areas in North America, as were grazing grasses and various vegetables, including turnips, spinach, and cabbage.

North American plants also traveled from west to east in the Columbian Exchange. Leading the way in economic importance was tobacco, a stimulant used widely in North America for ceremonial purposes and broadly adopted by Europeans and Africans as a recreational drug. Another stimulant, cocoa, also enjoyed significant popularity among Old World consumers. In addition, New World vegetables helped to revolutionize world food supplies. Remarkably easy to grow, maize thrived virtually everywhere. In addition, the white potato, tomato, **manioc**, squash, and beans native to the Western Hemisphere were soon cultivated throughout the world. Animals also moved in the Columbian Exchange. Europeans brought horses, pigs, cattle, oxen, sheep, goats, and domesticated fowl to America, where their numbers soared.

The transplanting of European grain crops and domesticated animals reshaped the American landscape. The contours of the land changed as trees and undergrowth were cleared; and the flow of water, the distribution of seeds, the nesting of birds, and the movement of native animals were altered by plowing and fencing. Gradually, imported livestock pushed aside native species, and imported plants choked out indigenous ones.

Probably the most important and far-reaching environmental impact of the Columbian Exchange was its overall influence on human populations. Although exchanged diseases killed many millions of Indians and lesser numbers of Africans and Europeans, the transplantation of North American plants significantly expanded food production in what had been marginal areas of Europe and Africa. At the same time, the environmental changes that Europeans wrought along the Atlantic shore of North America permitted

**syphilis** An infectious disease usually transmitted through sexual contact; if untreated, it can lead to paralysis and death.

**malarial** Related to malaria, an infectious disease characterized by chills, fever, and sweating; malaria is often transmitted through mosquito bites.

**cash crops** A crop raised in large quantities for sale rather than for local or home consumption.

**manioc** Also called cassava, a root vegetable native to South America that became a staple food source throughout the tropical world after 1500.

the region to support many more people than it had sustained under Indian cultivation. The overall result in Europe and Africa was a population explosion that eventually spilled over to repopulate a devastated North America.

### New Worlds in Africa and America

As the Columbian Exchange redistributed plants, animals, and populations among Europe, Africa, and North America, it permanently altered the history of both hemispheres. In

North America, for example, the combination of disease, environmental transformation, and immigrant population pressure changed American Indian life and culture in profound ways.

Clearly, imported disease had the most ruinous influence on the lives of Indians. Cooperative labor was required for hunting and gathering, and native groups that continued to depend on those activities faced extinction if disease caused a shortage of labor. Also, most societies in North America were **nonliterate**: elders and storytellers passed on their collective knowledge from one generation to another. Wholesale death by disease wiped out these bearers of practical, religious, and cultural knowledge. The result of this loss was confusion and disorientation among survivors. In an effort to avert extinction, remnant groups banded together to share labor and lore. Members of formerly self-sustaining kinship groups joined together in composite villages or, in some cases, intertribal leagues or confederacies. And the devastation that European diseases wrought eased the way for the

**nonliterate** Lacking a system of reading and writing, relying instead on storytelling and mnemonic (memory-assisting) devices such as pictures.



Parties of captured villagers from Africa's interior were bound together and marched to trading centers on the coast, where they were sold to European or Arab traders. The slave drivers were heavily influenced by outside contact. One of those shown here is wearing an Arab-influenced turban, whereas the clothing of the other is more European. Note, too, that the latter carries both a gun and a traditional African spear. The Granger Collection.

deeper penetration of Europeans into North America as Indians sought alliances with the newcomers in order to gain new tools, new sources of information, and new military partners, pushing Indians into increasingly tangled relationships with Europeans.

The Columbian Exchange also severely disrupted life in Africa. Africa had long been a key supplier of labor in the Old World. The ancient Egyptians had imported slaves from Ethiopia and other regions south of the Sahara Desert, a practice that continued through Roman times. But it was Islamic traders who turned the enslavement of Africans into a thriving enterprise. When North African Muslims established regular caravan routes across the desert into sub-Saharan Africa, slaves quickly became a dominant trade item, second only to gold in overall value. Perhaps as many as 4 million slaves were carried across the desert between 800 and the time the Portuguese redirected the trade in the sixteenth century.

**Slave Coast** A region of coastal West Africa adjacent to the Gold Coast; it was the principal source of the slaves taken out of West Africa from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century.

Portuguese entry revolutionized this economy. European technology, wealth, and ideas fostered the development of aggressive centralized states along the **Slave Coast** on the western shore of Africa’s Gulf of Guinea (see Map 1.3). Armed with European firearms, aggressive tribes such as the Ashanti engaged in large-scale raiding deep into the Niger and Congo River regions. These raiders captured millions of prisoners, whom they herded back to the coast and sold to Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and other European traders to supply labor for mines and plantations in the New World.

It is difficult to determine the number of people sold in the West African slave trade between 1500 and 1870. The most recent estimates suggest that more than 9.5 million enslaved Africans arrived in the New World during this three-hundred-year period. And they were only a small portion of the total number of Africans victimized by the system. On average, between 10 and 20 percent of the slaves shipped to the Americas died in transit. Adding in the numbers who were shipped to other locations in the Eastern Hemisphere, who were kept in slavery within Africa, and who died during the raids and on the marches to the coast yields a staggering total.

### A New World in Europe

The discovery of America and the Columbian Exchange also had staggering repercussions on life in Europe. New economic opportunities and new ideas demanded new kinds of political and economic organization. The discovery of the New

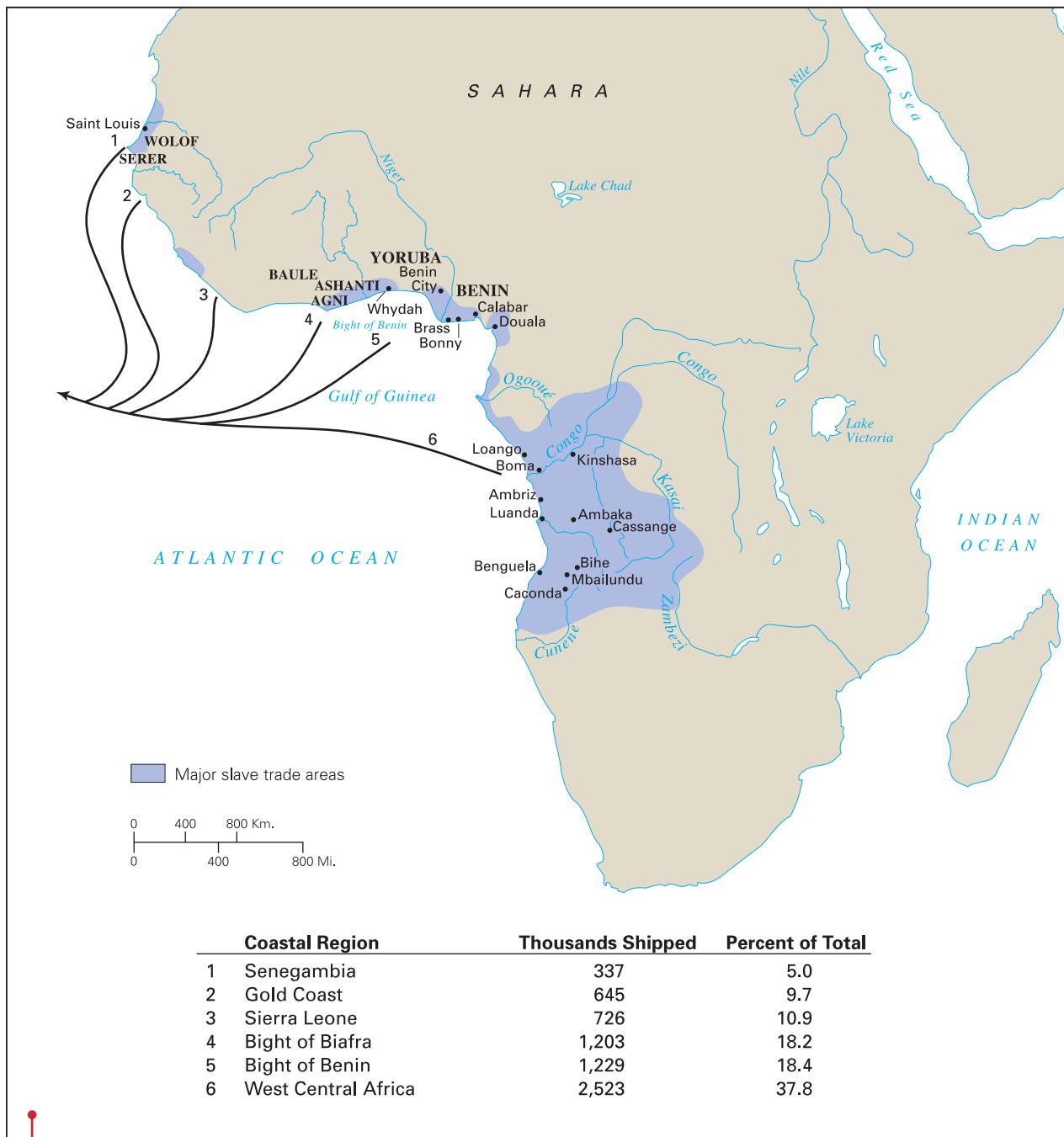
World clearly forced a new and more modern society onto Europeans.

Europe’s population was already rising when potatoes, maize, and other New World crops began to revolutionize food production. Populations then began to soar despite nearly continuous wars and a flood of migration to the New World. With populations on the rise and overseas empires to run, European rulers and their advisers saw that centralized states appeared to offer the most promising device for harnessing the riches of the New World while controlling ever-increasing numbers of people at home. The sons and daughters of Europe’s first generation of **absolute monarchs** chose to continue the consolidation of authority begun by their parents.

As Europeans responded to social, political, and economic changes, traditional patterns of authority broke down, especially in the realm of religion. A particularly devastating blow to religious authority came from the pen of Martin Luther, a German monk. Luther preached that salvation was God’s gift to the faithful. In 1517 he presented a set of arguments, the **Ninety-five Theses**, maintaining that only individual repentance and the grace of God could save sinners. The implications of this simple formula were profound: if Luther was right, then Christians could achieve salvation without the intercession of the Roman Catholic or any other church, undermining the keystone of both religious and political authority upon which order in Europe was based.

**absolute monarchs** The ruler of a kingdom in which every aspect of national life—including politics, religion, the economy, and social affairs—comes under royal authority.

**Ninety-five Theses** A document prepared by Martin Luther in 1517 protesting certain Roman Catholic practices that he believed were contrary to the will of God as revealed in Scripture.



MAP 1.3 Western Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Africa's western shore was the major source for slaves that were transported to European colonies on the Atlantic islands, the Caribbean islands, and mainland North and South America. Powerful coastal kingdoms mounted organized raids into many inland areas to capture people who were then marched to the coast for shipment to the New World. This map shows the several regions from which slaves were extracted, and the accompanying table gives approximate numbers of people who were exported from each.

**Reformation** The sixteenth-century rise of Protestantism, with the establishment of state-sponsored Protestant churches in England, the Netherlands, parts of Germany and Switzerland, and elsewhere.

**the Elect** According to Calvinism, the people chosen by God for salvation.

**Protestantism** From the root word protest, the beliefs and practices of Christians who broke with the Roman Catholic Church; rejecting church authority, the doctrine of “good works,” and the necessity of the priesthood, Protestants accepted the Bible as the only source of revelation, salvation as God’s gift to the faithful, and a direct, personal relationship with God as available to every believer.

**divine right** The idea that monarchs derive their authority to rule directly from God and are accountable only to God.

**Holy Roman Empire** A political entity, authorized by the Catholic Church in 1356, unifying central Europe under an emperor elected by four princes and three Catholic archbishops.

**Henry VIII** King of England (r. 1509–1547); his desire to annul his first marriage led him to break with Catholicism and establish the Church of England.

**Elizabeth I** Queen of England (r. 1558–1603); she succeeded the Catholic Mary I and reestablished Protestantism in England; her reign was a time of domestic prosperity and cultural achievement.

**dissenters** People who do not accept the doctrines of an established or national church.

Luther’s ideas took root among a generation of theologians who were dissatisfied with the corruption and superstition they found in the medieval Catholic Church, launching the period known as the **Reformation**. A Frenchman, John Calvin, further undermined the church’s authority by suggesting that God had preselected only some people for salvation. Calvin called these individuals **the Elect**. For all others, no earthly effort—no good works, no prayers, no church intervention—could save them. Thus neither popes nor kings had any claim to authority, and no one held the keys to salvation except God, but happiness on earth might be attained by wresting worldly authority from the hands of kings and putting it into the hands of the Elect.

The doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and others who wanted to reform the Catholic Church formed an ideology known as **Protestantism** that appealed to a broad audience in the rapidly changing European world of the sixteenth century. Ever critical of entrenched authority, the new doctrines attracted lawyers, bureaucrats, merchants, and manufacturers, whose economic and political status was on the rise thanks to increased prosperity generated by the Columbian Exchange. But many in the ruling classes also found aspects of the new theology attractive. In Germany, Luther’s challenge to the priesthood, and by extension to the Catholic Church itself, led many local princes to question the **divine right** to authority claimed by the ruler of the **Holy Roman Empire**. Similarly, **Henry VIII** of England, at one time a critic of Luther’s ideas, found Protestantism convenient when he wanted to resist the authority of the pope and expand English national power.

Henry VIII, the son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, was the first undisputed heir to the English throne in several generations, and he was consumed with the desire to avoid renewed civil war by having a son who could inherit the Crown. When his wife, Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Spain’s Ferdinand and Isabella, failed to bear a boy, Henry demanded in 1527 that Pope Clement VII grant him an annulment and permission to marry someone else. Fearful of Spanish reprisals on Catherine’s behalf, Clement refused. In desperation, Henry launched an English Reformation by seizing the Catholic Church in England, gaining complete control of it by 1535.

Henry was not a staunch believer in the views aired by Luther and others, but the idea of unifying religious and civil authority under his personal control did appeal to him. In addition, the Catholic Church owned extensive and valuable lands in England, estates that Henry could use to enhance his wealth and power. He needed Protestant support in his war against the pope’s authority, so he reluctantly opened the door to Protestant practices in his newly created Church of England.

After Henry’s death, his sickly, 9-year-old son—finally born to his third wife, Jane Seymour—ascended the throne as Edward VI. In the absence of a strong king, Protestants had virtual free rein, and the pace of reform quickened. Young King Edward, however, died after ruling for only six years. Mary, his oldest half-sister, succeeded him. The daughter of Henry’s first wife, Mary, had married Philip II of Spain and was a devout Roman Catholic. She attempted to reverse the reforming trend, cruelly suppressing Protestantism by executing several hundred leading reformers. But her brutality only drove the movement underground and made it more militant. By the time her half-sister Elizabeth, who was born and raised a Protestant, inherited the crown in 1558, the Protestant underground had become powerful and highly motivated. In fact, **Elizabeth I** spent her entire half-century reign trying to reach a workable settlement with Protestant **dissenters** that would permit them free worship without endangering her control over church and state.

# Summary

Making America began many thousands of years ago. Over millennia, the continent's residents continually crafted economic strategies, social arrangements, and political systems to preserve and enhance their lives. The result was a rich and flourishing world of different cultures, linked by common religious and economic bonds.

At first, the arrival of Europeans only added another society to an already cosmopolitan sphere. But ultimately, the dynamic European society that arose after the Crusades and plagues of the Middle Ages became more intrusive. As a result, Native Americans faced challenges that they had never imagined: economic crises, disease, war, and the unfolding environmental changes wrought by the Europeans who followed Columbus.

In addition, influences from the New World reached out to accelerate processes that were already affecting the Old. The flow of wealth and food out of the West was

increasing populations, and this growth, with the accompanying rise of powerful kings and unified nations, led to continuing conflict over newfound resources. In Africa, strong coastal states raided weaker neighboring groups, more than doubling the flow of slaves out of Africa. This, in turn, influenced further developments in America. As disease destroyed millions of Indians, newcomers from the entire Atlantic rim poured in to replace them. These newcomers came from very different physical environments and had distinctly foreign ideas about nature. Their novel practices and ideas helped to create a new America on top of the old, rendering drastic changes to the landscape. Continuing interactions among these various newcomers, and between them and the survivors of America's original people, would launch the process of Making America.

## Key Terms

Western Hemisphere, p. 3

millennia, p. 3

Crusades, p. 3

Holy Land, p. 4

Muslims, p. 4

Kenniwick Man, p. 4

Maize, p. 5

mound builder, p. 5

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# CHAPTER 2

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### **The New Europe and the Atlantic World**

Spanish Expansion in America  
Dreams of an English Eden  
The Decline of Spanish Power

### **European Empires in America**

The Troubled Spanish Colonial Empire  
The Dutch Enterprise  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Las Casas Debates Indian Rights, 1550  
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### **Indians and the European Challenge**

The Indian Frontier in New Spain  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** The Pueblo Revolt of 1680  
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The Indian World in the Northeast  
The New Indian World of the Plains

### **Conquest and Accommodation in a Shared New World**

New Spain's Northern Frontiers  
The Dutch Settlements  
Life in French Louisiana

### **Summary**

# A Continent on the Move 1400–1725

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Bartolomé de Las Casas**

In 1550, Spanish church officials ordered a council of learned theologians to assemble in the city of Valladolid to hear a debate over an issue so important that it challenged the entire underpinning of Spain's New World empire. At issue was the question of whether Native American Indians were human beings. Arguing that they were not was the well-respected scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. Arguing on the Indians' behalf was a former conquistador and **encomandero** named Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Born in 1474, Las Casas was the son of a merchant in Seville. His family was privileged enough that young Bartolomé had both access and the leisure time to study at Seville's cathedral school. Like many of his contemporaries, Las Casas decided to pursue a military career, going to Granada as a soldier in 1497. Then, in 1502, he embarked to the West Indies to seek his fortune in the conquest of the Americas.

Las Casas was successful as a **conquistador**: within a few years he had earned an imperial land grant with a full complement of Indian laborers. Meeting the demands of both church and king, he taught the Indians Catholicism but exploited their labor. Unlike many of his neighbors, Las Casas came to believe that Indians were every bit as much the children of God as the Spanish, and he took his religious duty to them seriously. Las Casas eventually took the vows to become a priest and devoted himself to the spiritual protection of the Indians. He devised a plan that would organize Indians into farming communities under church protection, allowing them to become self-sufficient contributors to the Spanish Empire. His plan won support from the archbishop of Toledo and the Spanish Parliament. In 1519 he was given permission to start an experimental community in what is now Venezuela, but Indians in the region understandably were suspicious and Spanish landlords were hostile. Despite this setback, Las Casas remained convinced that

#### **BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS**

A former conquistador, Bartolomé de Las Casas was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1512 and became one of the most vocal opponents of Spain's brutal exploitation of Native American people. He was responsible for major reforms in the way Spaniards were supposed to treat Indians. Las Casas brought his biblical learning and his New World experience to bear, winning the debate and Catholic support for continued reforms in Spanish colonial policy.

Bartholome de Las Casas (1474–1566) (oil on panel) (see also 129762), Spanish School, (16th century)/(Archivo de Indias, Seville, Spain/Mithra-Index/The Bridgeman Art Library)



Indians deserved full Christian recognition. He joined the Dominican order in 1523 and began writing a history of the Spanish Empire in America. Las Casas then took his case personally to Spain. In 1540, he petitioned for an audience with King Charles V. As he waited for Charles to respond, he wrote a report, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (“A Brief Report on the Destruction of the Indians”) summarizing his experiences and views.

By the time he finally met with Charles V, Las Casas was well prepared to argue for wholesale reform of Spanish Indian policy in America. And Charles was convinced. He signed a series of new laws in 1542—the *Leyes Nuevas*—reforming the *encomienda* system and placing Indian relations under church authority. To ensure that these reforms would be carried out, Las Casas was appointed bishop of Chiapas and sent back to the New World with forty fellow Dominicans to oversee the enforcement of the laws.

Las Casas served as bishop until 1547, when hostility from landowners in America and growing opposition to humane colonization at home prompted him to return to Spain. The chief spokesman for that growing opposition was Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a well-respected scholar. Speaking for Spanish investors and politicians who, like himself, had never been to the Western Hemisphere, Sepúlveda based his argument solely on logic and Scripture. According to his view, it was impossible for Native Americas to be descendants of Adam and Eve; they were, in his words, “as apes are to men.” As such, Indians did not deserve protection from the church. Las Casas countered with firsthand evidence, drawing on his varied experiences as priest, historian, conquistador, and *encomendero* in an attempt to prove that Indians truly were human beings.

Despite Sepúlveda’s great learning and his influence at court, he lost the debate: his writings were denied official recognition by the church, whereas Las Casas’s were accepted. But this official victory for Las Casas made little immediate difference. Although Sepúlveda’s views were rejected by the church, they were embraced by conquistadors. In arguing effectively for the recognition of Indians as human beings, however, Las Casas established an undercurrent of official disapproval that served as a braking mechanism against the extreme abuse of the Native population. The resulting three-way tension—between those who would exploit the Indians, those who sought to protect them, and the Indians themselves—would shape the colonial process and would punctuate life in the Americas for generations to come.

This debate focused early attention on a situation that all European colonizers would have to face. Despite Sepúlveda’s claims, the population native to the Americas *was* human. Of course, changing natural conditions and the influx of new forces such as epidemic disease had weakened them, but for centuries successful European settlement continued to require Indian cooperation. Court-based scholars like Sepúlveda might fool themselves into thinking that the Indians did not matter, but experienced veterans like Las Casas knew better. Conflicts with the Indians could spell disaster for vulnerable overseas colonies.

Conflicts with other imperial powers could lead to disaster as well. It was virtually inevitable that other nations would join Spain in seeking a share of the wealth promised

**encomendero** A land owner/proprietor in the *encomienda* system, Spain’s system of bonded labor in which Indians were assigned to Spanish plantation and mine owners in exchange for a tax payment and an agreement to “civilize” and convert them to Catholicism.

**conquistadors** Spanish soldiers who conquered Indian civilizations in the New World.

# Chronology

<b>1494</b>	Treaty of Tordesillas	<b>1608</b>	French-Huron alliance
<b>1500</b>	Portuguese discover Brazil	<b>1609</b>	Henry Hudson sails up Hudson River; Spanish found Santa Fe in present-day New Mexico
<b>1512</b>	Creation of the <i>encomienda</i> system	<b>1623</b>	Beginning of Dutch-Iroquois League alliance
<b>1519–1521</b>	Hernando Cortés invades Mexico	<b>1627</b>	Creation of Company of New France
<b>1532</b>	Pizarro conquers Peru	<b>ca. 1640</b>	Dutch take over Atlantic slave trade
<b>1542</b>	Las Casas convinces Spain to implement the Leyes Nuevas	<b>1645</b>	Dutch West India Company reorganized under Peter Stuyvesant
<b>1551</b>	Council of Valladolid rules that American Indians are human beings with souls	<b>1680</b>	Pueblo Revolt
<b>1558</b>	Elizabeth I becomes queen of England	<b>1683</b>	La Salle expedition down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico
<b>1565</b>	Spanish found St. Augustine in present-day Florida	<b>ca. 1700</b>	Beginning of French-Choctaw alliance West Indies dominate world sugar production
<b>1588</b>	English defeat Spanish Armada		
<b>1598</b>	Don Juan de Oñate destroys Ácoma pueblo		

by the New World. Forced into a defensive posture and unable to fend off the ambitions of numerous European rivals, Spain had to watch as the Dutch and the French carved out substantial inroads into North America.

The presence of so many, and such varied, Europeans presented both challenges and exceptional opportunities for Indians. In areas where a single European power was asserting dominance, Indians could often do little but bear up under relentless economic and religious pressures. Sometimes the encounter facilitated friendship, intermarriage, and the formation of complex composite societies; sometimes it led to open hostilities and even war. But in areas where two or more European powers were contesting for control, Indians could take advantage of their pivotal position and play one side against the other in seeking their own ends.

The constant interplay among different European traditions, a novel physical environment, and a dynamic Indian presence forged a series of new societies across the North American continent. Throughout the colonial era and beyond, these hybrid societies continued to influence historical development and to color the life of the people and the nation.

## The New Europe and the Atlantic World

- ★ **Why did European rulers promote exploration and colonization in North America?**
- ★ **How did religious and political rivalries influence how each European power approached New World colonization?**

Expansion into the New World and the subsequent economic and political pressures of colonization aggravated the crisis of authority in Europe. Eager to enlist political allies against Protestants, popes of this era used land grants in the New World as rewards to

faithful monarchs. At the same time, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, constantly fearful of being outflanked by Catholic adversaries, promoted the development of a powerful English navy and geographical exploration as defensive measures.

### Spanish Expansion in America

Spain's entry into Atlantic exploration first sparked a diplomatic crisis between the Spanish and Portuguese. Portugal feared that Spain's intrusion might endanger its hard-won trading enterprises in Africa and the Atlantic islands. Spain, however, claimed the right to explore freely. In 1493, the pope settled the dispute by drawing a line approximately 300 miles west of Portugal's westernmost holdings. Spanish exploration, he declared, was to be confined to areas west of the line (that is, to the New World) and Portuguese activity to areas east of it (to Africa and India). A year later, Spain and Portugal updated the agreement in the **Treaty of Tordesillas**, which moved the line an additional 1,000 miles westward. Most of the Western Hemisphere fell exclusively to Spain.

Over the next several decades, the Spanish monarchs recruited hardened veterans of the Reconquista (see page 6) to lead its New World colonization efforts. **Hernando Cortés** was one such figure. Cortés landed on the mainland of Mexico in 1519 with an army of six hundred soldiers. Within three years he and his small force had conquered the mighty Aztec Empire. Although it is tempting to suppose that Cortés's victory was the product of technological superiority, his weapons made less difference in the outcome than did several other factors. More important than guns were the warhorses and attack dogs that Cortés used to instill fear. Even more important than these, however, was the Spanish philosophy of war, which emphasized hard strikes against both armed and civilian targets. This type of campaign stood in stark contrast to the Aztec art of war, which was much more ceremonial in nature and limited in scope. Cortés was also adept at cultivating diplomatic advantages. An Indian woman whom he called Doña Marina served as his translator and cultural adviser, and with her help the conquistadors gained military support from numerous tribes of Mexican Indians who resented the Aztecs' power and their continuous demands for tribute. And finally, smallpox and other European germs weakened the Aztecs during the two years in which Cortés maintained strained but peaceful relations with them.

The Spanish Crown supported many other exploratory ventures designed to bring new regions under Spain's control. In 1513 and again in 1521, Juan Ponce de León led expeditions to Florida. Following up on these voyages, Pánfilo de Narváez embarked on a colonizing mission to Florida in 1527. Traveling with him was an enslaved Moor, Esteban, perhaps the first African to step foot in what is now the United States. When the party became stranded, Apalachees killed most of its members but took a few captives. One of these captives, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, escaped with three others in 1534. The stories they told upon returning to Mexico led the Spanish to send Hernando de Soto to claim the Mississippi River, and he penetrated into the heart of the mound builders' territory in present-day Louisiana and Mississippi. One year later, **Francisco Vásquez de Coronado** left Mexico to look for seven cities that Cabeza de Vaca had heard glittered with gold. Coronado eventually crossed what are now the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

Coronado never found Cabeza de Vaca's "cities of gold," but other Spaniards located enormous sources of wealth. In Bolivia, Colombia, and north-central Mexico, rich silver deposits rewarded the conquistadors. Enslaving local Indians for labor, Spanish officials everywhere in the New World quickly moved to rip precious metals out of the ground

**Treaty of Tordesillas** The agreement, signed by Spain and Portugal in 1494, that moved the line separating Spanish and Portuguese claims to territory in the non-Christian world, giving Spain most of the Western Hemisphere.

**Hernando Cortés** Spanish soldier and explorer who conquered the Aztecs and claimed Mexico for Spain.

**Francisco Vásquez de Coronado** Spanish soldier and explorer who led an expedition northward from Mexico in search of fabled cities of gold, passing through present-day New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas, giving Spain a claim to most of the American Southwest.



Acting on information collected from Indians on Mexico's frontiers, in 1540 Francisco Vásquez de Coronado set out to find seven cities of gold rumored to exist in the northern wilderness. Though his party crisscrossed much of the American Southwest, venturing as far as modern-day Kansas, they found no golden cities. Such parties, however, increased the Spaniards' knowledge of America and, through numerous encounters, increased Americans' knowledge of these strange invaders. The Granger Collection, New York.

and from what they characterized as “heathen temples.” Between 1545 and 1660, Indian and later African slaves extracted over 7 million pounds of silver from Spanish-controlled areas, twice the volume of silver held by all of Europe before 1492. In the process, Spain became the richest nation in Europe, perhaps in the world.

### Dreams of an English Eden

Given the stormy political and religious climate that prevailed during the sixteenth century, it is not surprising that Spain's successes in the New World stirred up conflict with the other emerging states in Europe. To England and France especially, the massive flow of wealth made Spanish power a growing threat that had to be checked. The continuing religious controversies that accompanied the Reformation worsened the situation. Economic, religious, and political warfare was the rule throughout the century. One of the most celebrated of these early conflicts involved Spain and England.

Tension between Spain and England had been running high ever since Henry VIII had annulled the marriage to his Spanish wife, Catherine of Aragon. That he quit the Catholic Church to do so and began permitting Protestant reforms in England added to the affront. Firmly wedded to the Catholic Church politically and religiously, Spain was aggressive in denouncing England. For his part, Henry was concerned primarily with domestic issues and steered away from direct confrontations with Spain or any of the other outraged Catholic countries.

The main exception to Henry's isolationism was an effort to bring Ireland and other outlying parts of his realm more firmly under his control. In 1541 Henry assumed the title “King of Ireland” and used his new status to institute both religious and political reforms. He confiscated lands controlled by Irish Catholic monasteries and the estates

of local lords who opposed him, channeling the money into building a stronger administrative structure. During the years to come, both Henry's heirs and the **Stuart kings** who would follow them continued a systematic policy of colonization in Ireland. In the process, English authorities instituted a new set of colonial offices and encouraged generations of military adventurers, both of which would shape and advance later ventures in North America.

During the reign of Henry's younger daughter, Elizabeth, the continuing flow of New World wealth into Spain and that nation's anti-Protestant aggression led to an upturn in hostile activity. When Philip II of Spain, Elizabeth's brother-in-law and most vehement critic, sent an army of twenty thousand soldiers to root out Protestantism in **the Netherlands**, only a few miles across the English Channel, the queen began providing covert aid to the Protestants rebels. Elizabeth also struck at Philip's most valuable and vulnerable possession: his New World empire. In 1577 Elizabeth authorized English **privateer** and explorer Francis Drake to attack Spanish ships in the area reserved for Spain under the Treaty of Tordesillas.

Elizabeth was open to virtually any venture that might vex her troublesome brother-in-law. New World colonizing efforts promised to do that and had the potential for enriching the kingdom as well. Although Elizabeth's father had confiscated and redistributed large tracts of church-owned land, farmland was becoming extremely scarce, and members of both the traditional nobility and the **gentry**—a class that was becoming increasingly important because of its investments in manufacturing and trading ventures—wanted more space for expansion. A relatively small kingdom, England could acquire more territory only by carving it out of the New World.

Thus in 1578, when Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed that John Cabot's voyages gave England rightful ownership of the North American coast, Elizabeth granted him permission to settle two hundred colonists between the St. Lawrence River and what is now Newfoundland. Though he succeeded in reaching the site, one disaster after another plagued the effort, and Gilbert himself vanished at sea. Thereafter, Gilbert's half-brother, **Sir Walter Raleigh**, took over the colonizing effort. This time, Elizabeth commanded Raleigh to locate farther south near the border of Spanish Florida, where an English base could facilitate raids on Philip's treasure fleets. Raleigh chose an island off the coast of present-day North Carolina. He advertised **Roanoke Island** as an "American Eden," where "the earth bringeth forth all things in abundance, as in the first Creation, without toile or labour." To honor his benefactor, he called this paradise Virginia, tribute to the unwed, and thus officially virgin, queen.

In 1585 Elizabeth further angered the Spanish king by openly sending an army of six thousand troops across the Channel to aid Dutch rebels. Philip responded by supporting Catholic plots within England to subvert Elizabeth's authority and bring down her Protestant state. As tensions increased, so did English piracy. Drake intensified his campaign, not only raiding Spanish ships at sea but attacking settlements in the Caribbean. By 1586, British troops were fighting the Spanish alongside Dutch rebels in Holland; Spanish spies were encouraging rebellion in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and British ships were raiding Spanish settlements in the New World. War loomed on the horizon.

### The Decline of Spanish Power

The enormous inflow of wealth from the New World brought Spain power that no European country since the Roman Empire had enjoyed, but such rapid enrichment was a mixed blessing. Starting in Spain and radiating outward, prices began to climb as the growth of the money supply outpaced the growth of

**Stuart kings** The dynasty of English kings who claimed the throne after the death of Elizabeth I, who left no heirs.

### the Netherlands/Holland/Dutch

Often used interchangeably, the first two terms refer to the low-lying area in Western Europe north of France and Belgium and across the English Channel from Great Britain; the Dutch are the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

**privateer** A captain who owned his own boat, hired his own crew, and was authorized by his government to attack and capture enemy ships.

**gentry** The class of English landowners ranking just below the nobility.

**Sir Walter Raleigh** English courtier, soldier, and adventurer who attempted to establish the Virginia Colony.

**Roanoke Island** Island off North Carolina that Raleigh sought to colonize beginning in 1585.

**inflation** Rising prices that occur when the supply of currency or credit grows faster than the available supply of goods and services.

European economies. Too much money was chasing too few goods. Between 1550 and 1600, prices doubled in much of Europe, and **inflation** continued to soar for another half-century.

In addition, the social impact of the new wealth was forcing European monarchs to expand geographically and crack down domestically. As prices rose, the traditional landholding classes earned enormous profits from the sale of food and other necessities. Other groups fared less well. Artisans, laborers, and landless peasants—by far the largest class of people in Europe—found the value of their labor constantly shrinking. Throughout Europe, social unrest increased as formerly productive and respected citizens were reduced to poverty and begging. Overseas expansion seemed an inviting solution to the problem of an impoverished population. It was a safety valve that relieved a potentially dangerous source of domestic pressure while opening opportunities to enhance national wealth through the development of colonies.

Sitting at the center of the new economy, Philip's Spain had the most to lose from rapid inflation and popular unrest. It also had the most to lose from New World expansion by any other European nation. Each New World claim asserted by a rival country represented the loss of a piece of treasure that Spain claimed as its own. Philip finally chose to confront building tensions by taking a desperate gamble: he would destroy England. This ploy, he thought, would effectively remove the Protestant threat, rid him of Elizabeth's ongoing harassment, and demonstrate to the rest of Europe that Spain intended to exercise absolute authority over the Atlantic world. In the spring of 1585, when tensions were at their peak, Philip began massing what was to be the largest marine force Europe had ever witnessed.

**armada** A fleet of warships.

In 1588 Philip launched an **armada** of 132 warships carrying more than three thousand cannon and an invasion force of thirty thousand men. Arriving off the shores of England in July, the so-called Invincible Armada ran up against small, maneuverable British defense ships commanded by Elizabeth's skilled captains. Drake and his fleet harassed the Spanish ships, preventing them from launching a successful attack. Then a storm blowing down from the North Sea scattered the Spanish fleet. Although Spanish power remained great for some time to come, the Armada disaster effectively ended Spain's near-monopoly over New World colonization.

## European Empires in America

- ★ **What similarities and differences characterized Spanish, French, and Dutch patterns of empire building in North America?**
- ★ **How did the colonists' experiences challenge and help to reshape imperial policies?**

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Spain, France, England, and a number of other European nations vied for control of the Americas and for domination of the transatlantic trade (see Map 2.1). England was somewhat delayed in its colonizing efforts, and by the time it became deeply involved in New World ventures, Spain, France, and Holland had already made major progress toward establishing empires in America. These European settlements not only affected England's colonization process profoundly, but through their interactions among themselves and with the Native Americans, they also created unique societies in North America whose presence influenced the entire course of the continent's history.



**MAP 2.1** European and Indian Settlements in the Americas

Although Europeans were at first unsure about the implications of stumbling over a portion of the world that was new to them, they quickly came to grasp the economic and military potential involved in American colonization. As this map shows, exploration continued into the seventeenth century as Europeans scrambled to claim individual pieces of New World real estate.

### The Troubled Spanish Colonial Empire

**cabildo secular** Secular municipal council that provided local government in Spain's New World empire.

**feudal** Relating to a system in which landowners held broad powers over peasants or tenant farmers, providing protection in exchange for loyalty and labor.

**requiremento** A provision in Spanish colonial law that required conquistadors to inform Indians that they were subject to Spanish authority and to absorb them peacefully.

**serfs** Peasants who were bound to a particular estate but, unlike slaves, were not the personal property of the estate owner and received traditional feudal protections.

**Henry Hudson** Dutch ship captain and explorer who sailed up the Hudson River in 1609, giving the Netherlands a claim to the area now known as New York.

Although the destruction of the Armada in 1588 struck a terrible blow at Madrid's New World monopoly, the Spanish Empire continued to grow. By the end of the seventeenth century, it stretched from New Mexico southward through

Central America and much of South America into the Caribbean islands and northward again into Florida. Governing such a vast empire was difficult, and periodic efforts to reform the system usually failed. Two agencies in Spain, the House of Trade and the Council of the Indies, set Spanish colonial policy. In the colonies, Crown-appointed viceroys wielded military and political power in each of the four divisions of the empire. The Spanish colonies set up local governments as well; each town had a **cabildo secular**, a municipal council, as well as judges and other minor officials. The colonial administrators were appointed rather than elected, and most were envoys from Spain rather than nativeborn individuals.

Over the centuries, as the layers of bureaucracy developed, corruption and inefficiency expanded as well. One major source of unrest stemmed from a persistent New World problem: the shortage of labor. In Spain, work was directed by **feudal** landlords—*encomenderos*—whose military service to the king entitled them to harness the labor of Spanish peasants. In New Spain, Indians took the place of the peasants in what was called the *encomienda* system. Under a law passed in 1512, when an Indian group was first encountered by the Spanish, the conquistador was required to explain to them that they were subject to the king and to the Catholic Church. Having satisfied this **requiremento**, the *encomenderos* gained the right to use the Indians' labor for nine months each year. For his part, the *encomendero* paid a tax to the Crown for each Indian he received and agreed to teach his workers the Catholic faith, Spanish language and culture, and a "civilized" vocation.

Despite promises to uplift local Indians, the system in reality was brutally exploitative. As Bartolomé de Las Casas reported both to the Council of the Indies and to the king himself, landlords frequently overworked their Indian **serfs** and failed in their "civilizing" responsibilities. As the result of Las Casas's appeal, the Leyes Nuevas turned Indian relations in New Spain over to the church, and priests were instructed to enforce the laws. Among the new regulations was a stipulation that a priest accompany all expeditions to certify the proper execution of the *requiremento* and serve as witnesses that Indians were treated lawfully. Colonists often ignored even these slim protections. Some simply forged a priest's signature, anticipating that by the time the document reached administrators in faraway Madrid, no one would know the difference. Others disregarded the law altogether.

Bureaucratic and church interference in the labor system was one source of tension. Taxes were another. Spanish colonists were taxed to support the huge and largely corrupt, unrepresentative, and self-serving imperial bureaucracy. But for many decades the wealth produced within this empire overshadowed all governing problems. The gold, silver, and copper mined by Indian and later African slaves so dazzled Spanish officials that imperial authorities took few serious steps toward practical reform until the end of the seventeenth century.

### The Dutch Enterprise

Interestingly, it was a former colony, the Netherlands, that presented one of the most serious threats to Spain's New World monopoly. The Armada disaster in 1588 had tipped the scales in favor of Dutch Protestant rebels, and the newly independent nation quickly developed a thriving commercial economy. Holland's first serious claim to American territory came in 1609, when Dutch sea captain **Henry Hudson**

# Investigating America

## Las Casas Debates Indian Rights, 1550

In his lengthy debate with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda before the Council of Valladolid, Bartolomé de Las Casas repeatedly stressed the remarkable accomplishments made by Indians, both in creating advanced civilizations of their own and in adapting to Spanish civilization. Many witnesses disputed these claims, whereas others argued that such accomplishments were irrelevant. Though perhaps clever, Sepúlveda argued, Indians lacked souls and therefore could never become truly civilized Christians. Like animals, then, they could be exploited but never embraced. In this excerpt from the lengthy public debate, Las Casas drew on Church doctrine to refute this claim, and in the end, his argument won the day and became the official position for the Catholic Church and the Crown:

.....

Who, therefore, except one who is irreverent toward God and contemptuous of nature, has dared to write that countless numbers of natives across the ocean are barbarous, savage, uncivilized, and slow witted when, if they are evaluated by an accurate judgment, they completely outnumber all other men? This is consistent with what Saint Thomas writes: "The good which is proportionate to the common state of nature is to be found in most men and is lacking only in a few. . . . Thus it is clear that the majority of men have sufficient knowledge to guide their lives, and the few who do not have this knowledge are said to be half-witted or fools." Therefore, since barbarians of that kind, as Saint Thomas says, lack that good of the intellect which is knowledge of the truth, a good proportionate to the common condition of rational nature, it is evident that in each part of the world, or anywhere among the nations, barbarians of this sort or freaks of rational nature can only be quite rare. For since God's love of mankind is so great and it is his will to save all men, it is in accord with his

wisdom that in the whole universe, which is perfect in all its parts, his supreme wisdom should shine more and more in the most perfect thing: rational nature. Therefore, the barbarians of the kind we have placed in the third category are most rare, because with such natural endowments they cannot seek God, know him, call upon him, or love him. They do not have a capacity for doctrine or for performing the acts of faith or love.

Again, if we believe that such a huge part of mankind is barbaric, it would follow that God's design has for the most part been ineffective, with so many thousands of men deprived of the natural light that is common to all peoples. And so there would be a great reduction in the perfection of the entire universe—something that is unacceptable and unthinkable for any Christian.

.....

- What, exactly, was Las Casas asserting in this passage? How does this proposition set up the rest of his argument?
- What does the reference to writings by Saint Thomas tell us about Las Casas's view of human nature? How does it refute Sepúlveda's claims concerning Indians?
- Judging from this brief excerpt from Las Casas's argument, why do you suppose he won the debate?
- Why would the Catholic Church have chosen to endorse and publicize his views and not Sepúlveda's?

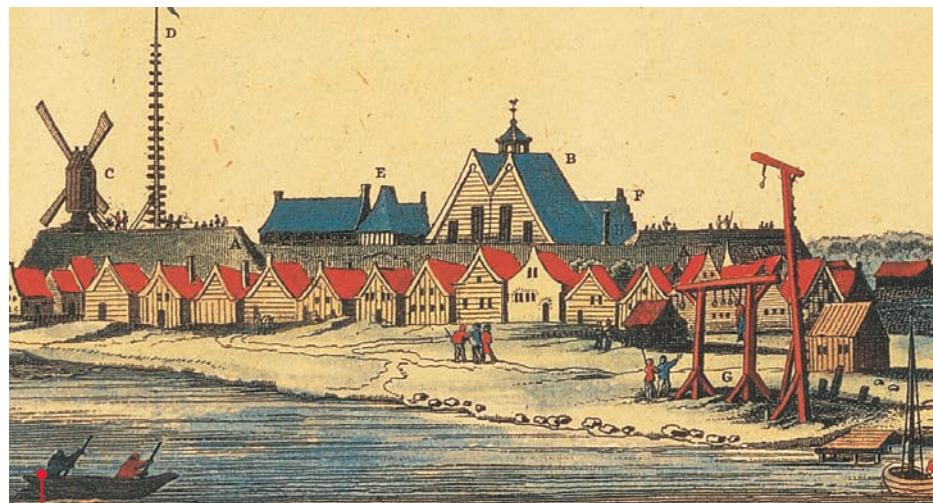
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Source: Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians: The Defense of the Most Reverend Lord, Don Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, of the Order of Preachers, Late Bishop of Chiapa, Against the Persecutors and Slanderers of the Peoples of the New World Discovered Across the Seas*. Translated, edited and annotated by Stafford Poole (DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, © 1974). Used by permission of Northern Illinois University Press.

explored the East Coast in search of the elusive Northwest Passage. He sailed up a large river that he hoped would lead him west to the Pacific. After realizing that he had not found the hoped-for route to the Far East, he returned to Holland and reported to his sponsor, the Dutch East India Company, that the territory surrounding this river—which he named after himself—was “pleasant with Grasse & Flowers and Goodly Trees” and that the Indians were friendly.



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Its location at the mouth of the Hudson River made the Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam a particularly important colonial trading center. Furs flowed down the river from Fort Orange (near modern Albany, New York), while guns, tools, and other trade goods traveled the other way. This etching (detail), based on a watercolor illustration painted around 1653, captures the city's colorful vibrancy after Peter Stuyvesant and the Dutch burghers merged their power to bring order and prosperity. The weighing beam in the foreground illustrates both the prosperity and quest for order: it was used not only to weigh the loads of goods flowing through the town, but was also used as a whipping post and gallows. Museum of the City of New York. Gift of Dr. N. Sulzberger.

Hudson's employers did not share his dream of settlement; however, a fashion trend that seized Europe late in the sixteenth century provided a powerful incentive for investment in the region. The immense popularity of the broad-brimmed beaver felt hat created an insatiable demand for fur, and the experiences of early explorers and fishermen along America's North Atlantic shore indicated that a near-endless supply was ripe for the trapping. Seeking to tap in on this "brown gold," the Dutch built a trading post on the Hudson River at Albany and an export station on Manhattan Island in 1614. Real Dutch efforts at New World colonization, however, did not begin until investors formed the **Dutch West India Company** in 1621. The new company financed Dutch privateers who successfully raided Spanish and Portuguese treasure ships and, in 1634, overcame weak Spanish and Portuguese resistance to conquer a number of islands in the Caribbean.

The Dutch also pushed the Portuguese aside to take control of the transatlantic slave trade.

Farther north, the Company instructed official Peter Minuit to negotiate a lease for the entire island of Manhattan from the Manhates Indians in 1626. This acquisition gave it control over the mouth of the river that Hudson had discovered and the lands that it drained. The Dutch focus remained upriver, however; the company did nothing to attract settlers, and by 1629 only three hundred colonists had spread themselves in a thin ribbon from the capital, New Amsterdam, on Manhattan Island, upriver to Albany. But in that year, the Dutch West India Company drew up a comprehensive business plan to maximize profits and minimize dependence on local Indians for food and other support. To encourage the agricultural development necessary to support the fur industry, the company offered huge estates called **patroonships** to any company stockholder willing

**Dutch West India Company** Dutch investment company formed in 1621 to develop colonies for the Netherlands in North America.

**patroonships** Huge grants of land given to any Dutch West India Company stockholder who, at his own expense, brought fifty colonists to New Netherland; the colonists became the tenants of the estate owner, or patroon.



# It Matters Today

## THE FELT HAT FAD

Changes in fashion come and go, and we seldom give much thought to them as being historically significant. But the sudden popularity of felt hats in the late sixteenth century had a profound impact on not just America's history, but the history of the entire world. The flood of new wealth flowing into Europe from America permitted people of means to keep up with the latest fashion trends. Being in style became increasingly important to status-conscious merchants and other beneficiaries of the New World boom. Demand for the beaver fur to make the felt became so steep that virtually the entire population of Old World beavers was wiped out, and entire industries arose in France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Russia to import this "brown gold" from the

Americas. Fur drew Europeans up virtually every waterway in North America, leading to the founding of many of the most prominent cities in America today. It is safe to say that without this seemingly silly fashion trend, little in the United States would be as we know it today.

- Another important trade item during this era was deerskins. Research the demand for deerskins and then discuss what this tells us about socioeconomic changes during this era.
- Identify a current fashion trend and discuss its impact on global society. What differences do you think this trend will make on the future?

to bring fifty colonists to **New Netherland** at his own expense. In exchange, the patroons would enjoy near-feudal powers over their tenants. But few prosperous Dutchmen were interested in becoming New World barons. Rensselaerswyck, the estate of Kilian van Rensselaer, was the only patroonship to develop in accordance with the company's plan. The colony's development came to rely instead on many poorer migrants who were drawn by unofficial promises of land ownership and economic betterment.

Settlers from just about anywhere were welcome in New Netherland—the colony attracted an extremely diverse population, including German and French Protestants, free and enslaved Africans, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. In 1638 the Dutch even encouraged Swedish fur traders to create their own colony, New Sweden, within its boundaries. Although the Dutch West India Company was officially in charge, the actual conduct of day-to-day affairs was run by an elite group of **burghers**—men in New Amsterdam whose economic and political successes gave them significant influence. In an effort to reassert its power, the company reorganized its operations in 1645, appointing Peter Stuyvesant to manage all of its affairs in the Western Hemisphere. Stuyvesant immediately came into conflict with the local burghers in New Amsterdam, and in 1647 he was forced to create a compromise government that gave the burghers an official voice through a council of nine appointed representatives. Six years later, Stuyvesant and the council created a municipal government modeled on those back home in Holland. Despite this nod to democratic government, Stuyvesant ran company affairs with an iron hand, significantly tightening operations throughout the colony.

### The French Presence in America

Although France made a number of efforts to compete with Spain's New World projects during the sixteenth century, Spanish power was sufficient to prevent any major successes.

After Madrid founded the city of **Saint Augustine** in 1565, the French concentrated their efforts farther north. Early in the seventeenth century,

**New Netherland** The colony founded by the Dutch West India Company in present-day New York; its capital was New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island.

**burghers** Town dwellers who were free from feudal obligations and were responsible for civic government during the medieval period in Europe; in New Amsterdam these were men who were not Dutch West India Company officials, but who governed civic affairs through their political influence.

**Saint Augustine** First colonial city in the present-day United States; located in Florida and founded by Pedro Menéndez de Aviles for Spain in 1565.

**Samuel de Champlain** French explorer who traced the St. Lawrence River inland to the Great Lakes, founded the city of Quebec, and formed the French alliance with the Huron Indians.

**New France** The colony established by France in what is now Canada and the Great Lakes region of the United States.

**Company of New France** Company established by Cardinal Richelieu to bring order to the running of France's North American enterprises.

**courreurs de bois** Literally, “runners of the woods”; independent French fur traders who lived among the Indians and sold furs to the French.

**Community of Habitants of New France** Company chartered by Anne of Austria to make operations in New France more efficient and profitable; it gave significant political power to local officials in Canada.

**Company of the West** Company chartered by Colbert after New France became a royal colony; modeled on the Dutch West India Company, it was designed to maximize profits to the Crown.

**Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle** French explorer who followed the Mississippi River from present-day Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico, giving France a claim to the entire river-way and adjoining territory.

**Louisiana** French colony south of New France; it included the entire area drained by the Mississippi River and all of its tributary rivers.

**Samuel de Champlain**, the “father of **New France**,” established trading posts in Nova Scotia and elsewhere, founded the city of Quebec, and in 1608 formed an enduring alliance with the Huron Indians. But, despite these efforts and the potential profitability of the fur trade, French colonial authorities at first took little interest in overseas enterprises.

In 1627 French minister Cardinal Richelieu chartered the **Company of New France**, awarding a group of the king's favorites a license to establish plantations in Canada, but the venture failed to attract much interest. French Protestants, who might have emigrated to avoid religious persecution, were forbidden to move to the colony, and few French Catholics wanted to migrate to America. The colonizing effort did not attract enough rent-paying tenants to make the envisioned estates profitable. Equally important was the fact that the few French peasants and small farmers who did venture to the New World found life in the woods and the company of Indians preferable to life as tenant farmers. So-called *courreurs de bois*, or “runners of the woods,” married Indian women and lived among the tribes, returning to the French settlements only when they had enough furs to sell to make the trip worthwhile.

Frustrated by the lack of profits, Richelieu reorganized the Company of New France in 1633, dispatching Champlain, now bearing the title Lieutenant of New France, with three ships of supplies, workmen, and soldiers who, it was hoped, would breathe new life into the colony. The Company set up posts in Quebec, Montreal, and a few more remote locations, and became the primary outfitter of and buyer from the *courreurs de bois* and amassed huge profits by reselling the furs in Europe. After Richelieu's death in 1642, queen mother and French regent Anne of Austria acted on complaints filed by both fur trade investors and Jesuit missionaries that the Company of New France was not governing effectively. She chose to empower a new company, the **Community of Habitants of New France**, with a monopoly on the fur trade and the privilege of granting land claims. Then, in 1647, Anne approved the formation of a council that consisted of the governor, the local director of the Jesuits, the colony's military commandant, and three elected officials. Meanwhile, the Company of New France continued technically to own the land and retained the power to appoint the governor and court officials in the colony.

Local authorities managed most of the colony's affairs until 1663, when the Crown began to intervene seriously in Canada. Having taken the functions of state into his own hands, young Louis XIV gave his finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, considerable authority over all monetary matters, including colonial enterprises. Seeking to make New France more efficient and to increase its contribution to the empire at large, Colbert founded the **Company of the West**, modeled on the highly successful Dutch West India Company. He also revoked the land titles held by the Company of New France, putting them directly into the king's hands, and overturned the political power of the Community of Habitants, making New France a royal colony.

Although the king reaped enormous profits from the fur trade, his colonial interests ranged beyond this single source of income. In 1683, a French expedition led by **Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle**, followed the Mississippi River all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. La Salle immediately claimed the new territory for Louis XIV of France, naming it **Louisiana** in his honor. The king sent settlers to the lower Mississippi Valley in 1698 under the leadership of Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville, who in 1699 raised Louisiana's first French fort, near present-day Biloxi, Mississippi. In 1718, French authorities built the city of New Orleans to serve as the capital of the new territory.

The acquisition of Louisiana was a major accomplishment for La Salle and for France. The newly discovered riverway gave the French a rich, untapped source of furs as well as an alternative shipping route, allowing them to avoid the cold, stormy North Atlantic.

Also, if an agricultural venture could be started in the new territory, it might serve as an inexpensive source of supplies to support both the fur trade in Canada and France's sugar plantations in the Caribbean. But, perhaps of greatest importance was Louisiana's strategic location between Spain's claims in the Southwest and the Dutch and other colonies along the eastern seaboard. Controlling this piece of real estate gave Louis considerable leverage in international diplomacy.

## Indians and the European Challenge

- ★ **How did changes in the natural environment affect Indian societies during the early colonial period?**
- ★ **How did the arrival of Europeans influence continuing adaptations by Native American groups?**

Native Americans did not sit idly by while the European powers carved out empires in North America. Some joined the newcomers, serving as advisers and companions. Others sought to use the Europeans as allies to accomplish their own economic, diplomatic, or military goals. Still others, overwhelmed by the onset of European diseases and shifting population pressures, withdrew into the interior. The changes in native America created both obstacles and opportunities, giving shape to the patterns of expansion and conflict that characterized the colonial world.

### The Indian Frontier in New Spain

Indian assistance had been critical in Spain's successful campaigns against the Aztecs and Incas. In Mexico, for example, groups who had been forced to pay tribute to the Aztec Empire gladly allied themselves with the Spanish in what the natives

perceived as an opportunity to win their independence. Their hopes were soon dashed when the Spanish simply replaced the Aztecs as the new lords of a tributary empire.

Once their New World empire was firmly rooted, Spanish expansion met little native resistance until 1598, when a particularly brutal conquistador named **Don Juan de Oñate** led a large expedition to the Rio Grande region of New Mexico. When some Pueblos resisted Oñate's efforts to impose Spanish culture and religion, the conquistador chose to make an example of **Ácoma pueblo**. It took Oñate's troops three days to subdue the settlement, but Spanish steel finally overcame Ácoma clubs and stone knives. When the battle was over, Oñate ordered eight hundred Indians executed and made slaves of the nearly seven hundred survivors, mostly women and children. In addition, each male survivor over the age of 25 had one foot chopped off to prevent his escape from slavery. Two **Hopi Indians** who had been visiting Ácoma at the time of the battle had their right hands cut off and then were sent home as examples of the price of resistance.

This blatant cruelty disgusted even the most cynical authorities in New Spain, and both the church and state stepped in. Oñate was removed, and the surviving Indians were placed under joint military and religious protection. Some members of Oñate's company remained, however, founding the town of **Santa Fe** in 1609. Others scattered to set up ranches throughout the region.

Thanks in part to Las Casas's efforts, the church played a key role in developing the colonies, especially in the stark regions along Mexico's northern frontier where there were no gold mines or profitable plantations. The Franciscan order led church efforts in New Mexico and put a peculiar stamp on the pattern of Indian relations. A highly **ascetic** and disciplined order, the Franciscans were particularly offended by the Pueblos' religion

**Don Juan de Oñate** Spaniard who conquered New Mexico and claimed it for Spain in the 1590s.

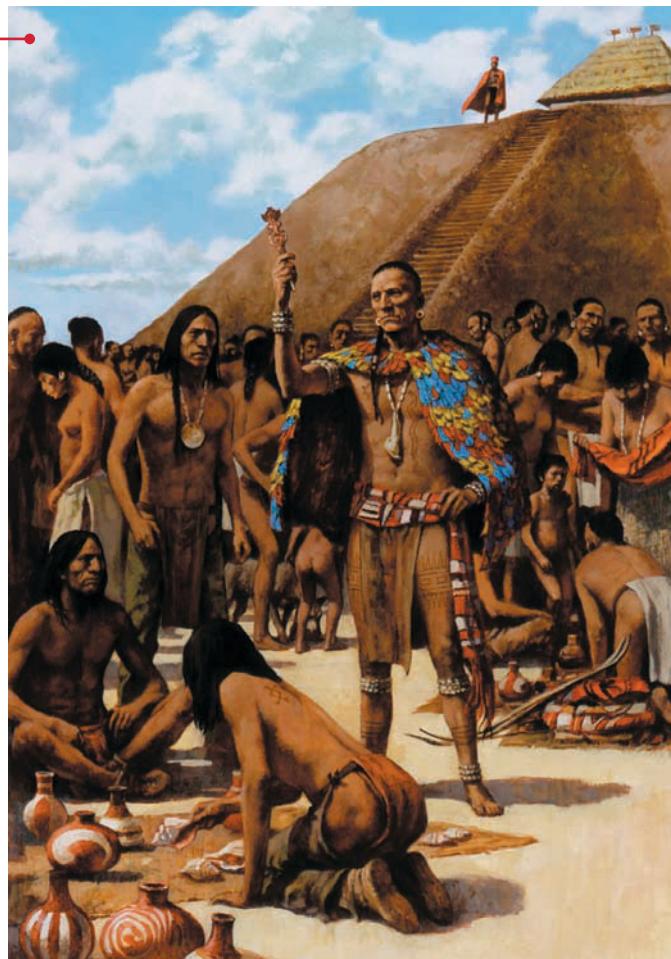
**Ácoma pueblo** Pueblo Indian community that resisted Spanish authority in 1598 and was subdued by the Spanish.

**Hopi Indians** Indians who were related to the Comanches and Shoshones and took up residence among the Pueblo Indians as agricultural town-dwellers; their name means "peaceful ones."

**Santa Fe** Spanish colonial town established in 1609; eventually the capital of the province of New Mexico.

**ascetic** Practicing severe abstinence or self-denial, generally in pursuit of spiritual awareness.

Before the arrival of European explorers like Hernando de Soto in the early 1540s, Indians in the American Southeast had lived in huge cities characterized by monumental architecture and a stratified class system with priest kings at the top, skilled craftsmen and traders in the middle, and common farmers and laborers at the bottom. This painting by archaeological reconstruction artist Tom Hall captures the bustling marketplace at Moundville, a large pre-Columbian city in present-day Alabama. Moundville appears to have begun to decline in around 1350—perhaps a consequence of climate change—and collapsed altogether following the introduction of European diseases. Scholars are unsure about what became of Moundville's survivors, but it is likely that they formed smaller villages that were easier to support in the new environment. All of the Southeastern Indian societies—the Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, Natchez, and many others—went through a similar transition during this period. Tom Hall/National Geographic Society Image Collection.



and lifestyle. Indian ceremonies that involved various types of traditional religious objects smacked of idolatry to the Franciscans. Seeking to root out what they viewed as evil, the priests embarked on a wholesale effort to destroy every vestige of the Indians' religion. One priest, Fray Alonso de Benavides, bragged in the 1620s that in one day he confiscated "more than a thousand idols of wood," which he then burned. The priests also interfered in the most intimate social aspects of Pueblo life, imposing foreign ideas about sexual relations and family structure, punishing most of the Pueblos' traditional practices as sinful.

After nearly a century of enduring these assaults on their most fundamental values, the Pueblos struck back. In 1680 a traditional leader named Popé led an uprising that united virtually all of the Indians in New Mexico against Spanish rule. The **Pueblo Revolt** left four hundred Spaniards dead as the rebels captured Santa Fe and drove the invaders from their land. It took almost a decade for the Spanish to regroup. In 1689 troops moved back into the region and over the next several years waged a brutal war to recapture the territory. The fighting continued off and on until the end of the century, but Spanish settlers began returning to New Mexico after the recapture of Santa Fe in 1693.

**Pueblo Revolt** Indian rebellion against Spanish authority in 1680 led by Popé; succeeded in driving the Spanish out of New Mexico for nearly a decade.

# Investigating America

## The Pueblo Revolt of 1680

Unhappy with the inability of either the Crown or the church to protect them from famine or attacks by other tribes, the Pueblo turned to their old religions. In response, Governor Juan Francisco Treviño ordered the arrest of forty-seven Pueblo medicine men in 1675 and accused them of practicing witchcraft. Three were hanged by Spanish authorities, and a fourth prisoner committed suicide. Other Pueblo men were publicly whipped and released from custody, among them was Popé, who then planned what became known as the Pueblo Revolt. After the rebellion ended, an Indian known to the Spanish as Juan gave this testimony to authorities by way of a translator:

[J]uan said that what he knows concerning this question is that not all of them joined the said rebellion willingly; that the chief mover of it is an Indian who is a native of the pueblo of San Juan, named El Pope, and that from fear of this Indian all of them joined in the plot that he made. Thus he replied. Asked why they held the said Pope in such fear and obeyed him, and whether he was the chief man of the pueblo, or a good Christian, or a sorcerer, he said that the common report that circulated and still is current among all the natives is that the said Indian Popé talks with the devil, and for this reason all held him in terror, obeying his commands. . . .

The said persons asking him what he thought about the actions of the Indians and whether their peaceful actions were sincere, he told them, 'I do not know what to say to you. If there should be any treason, I will warn you.' And in virtue of what they had communicated, he asked the said Luis de Quintana for the loan of a horse, saying to him, "Lend me a horse."

- Historians have to recreate the past using any materials available to them, and sometimes documents like these must be used with special care. What motivation might Juan have had to speak with authorities? What evidence suggests that some of the words used were supplied by the translator, or altered by him?
- Should historians even use documents obtained under what today would be regarded as duress?
- Is it possible that what Juan told authorities about Popé was partly true, even if the larger testimony itself is suspect?

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Source: Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., and Charmion Clair Shelby, trans. *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680–1682*. (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942). Volume 9, 232–253.

### The Indian World in the Southeast

Members of Spanish exploring expeditions under would-be conquistadors such as Ponce de León and de Soto were the first Europeans to contact the mound builder societies and other Indian groups in the Southeast. Although their residential and ceremonial centers often impressed the Spaniards, these Mississippian agricultural groups had no gold and could not easily be enslaved. The conquistadors moved on without attempting to force Spanish rule or the Catholic religion on them.

Although the Spanish presence in the region was small, its impact was enormous. The Spanish introduced European diseases into the densely populated towns in the Mississippi River region. Epidemics wiped out entire Native American civilizations and forced survivors to abandon their towns and entirely modify their ways of life. Certain groups, among them the Cherokees and Creeks, formed village-based economies that combined agriculture, hunting, and gathering. As had happened earlier in the



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**Creek Confederacy** Alliance of Indians living in the Southeast; formed after the lethal spread of European diseases to permit a cooperative economic and military system among survivors.

Northeast among the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and others, this change in economy led to increasing intergroup warfare. And like the Haudenosaunee, many southeastern groups created formal confederacies as a way of coping. One example is the **Creek Confederacy**, a union of many groups who had survived the Spanish epidemics. Internally, members created an economic and social system in which each population contributed to the welfare of all and differences were settled through athletic competition—a ballgame not unlike modern lacrosse—rather than warfare. And when new Europeans arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Creeks and other confederacies found it beneficial to welcome them as trading partners and allies, balancing the competing demands of the Spanish and French, and later the English. To some degree, they took advantage of the European rivalries to advance their own interests against those of neighboring confederacies.

### The Indian World in the Northeast

By the time Europeans had begun serious exploration and settlement of the Northeast, the economic and cultural changes among Eastern Woodlands Indians that had begun between 1350 and 1450 had resulted in the creation of two massive—and opposing—alliance systems. On one side were the Hurons, Algonquins, Abenakis, Micmacs, Ottawas, and several smaller tribes. On the other was the Haudenosaunee Confederacy that Europeans called the Iroquois League.

The costs and benefits of sustained European contact first fell to the Hurons and their allies. The Abenakis, Micmacs, and others who lived along the northern shore of the Atlantic were the first groups drawn into trade with the French, and it was among them that the *courreurs de bois* settled and intermarried. These family ties became firm economic bonds when formal French exploration brought these groups into more direct contact with the European trading world. This partnership, however, posed a serious threat to the Haudenosaunee. Much of the territory being harvested for furs by the Hurons had once belonged to the Haudenosaunee, and the Confederacy wanted it back. If they could push the Hurons and their allies out and take control of the St. Lawrence River, the French would then have to trade exclusively with them.

The arrival of the Dutch in Albany, however, offered the Haudenosaunee an attractive diplomatic alternative. In 1623 the Dutch West India Company invited representatives from the Iroquois League to a meeting at **Fort Orange**, offering them friendship and trade. The Haudenosaunee responded enthusiastically, but in a way that the Dutch had not anticipated. Instead of entering peacefully into the trade, the Haudenosaunee imposed their authority over all of the Indian groups already trading with the Dutch. They began a bloody war with the **Mohicans**, who had been the Dutch traders' source for furs in the Hudson Valley. By 1627 the Haudenosaunee had driven the Mohicans out of the region and reclaimed control over the flow of furs.

Trade was so vigorous that the Haudenosaunee soon wiped out fur supplies in their own territory and began a serious push to acquire new sources. Beginning in the late 1630s, the Iroquois Confederacy entered into a long-term aggressive war against the Hurons and their allies in New France; against the Munsees, Delawares, and other groups in the Susquehanna and Delaware River valleys to the south; and even against the Iroquois-speaking Eries to the west. Citing Hiawatha's legacy, the Haudenosaunee justified their aggression by claiming that their conquests were simply bringing more people into the shelter of the Great Tree of Peace, expanding the confederacy to include all the northeastern Indians.

**Fort Orange** Dutch trading post established near present-day Albany, New York, in 1614.

**Mohicans** Algonquin-speaking Indians who lived along the Hudson River, were dispossessed in a war with the Haudenosaunee confederacy, and eventually were all but exterminated.

### The New Indian World of the Plains

The vast area of the Great Plains, though largely unexplored and untouched by Europeans, also underwent profound transformation during the period of initial contacts. Climate change, the pressure of shifting populations, and the introduction of novel European goods through lines of kinship and trade created an altogether new culture and economy among the Indians in this region.

Before about 1400, Indians living on the plains rarely strayed far from the riverways that form the Missouri River drainage, where they lived in villages sustained by agriculture, hunting, and gathering (see pages 9–10). The climate cooldown that affected their neighbors to the east had a similar effect on the Plains Indians: growing seasons became shorter, and the need to hunt became greater. But at the same time, this shift in climate produced an increase in one food source, **buffalo**, a survivor of the great ice ages. Between 1300 and 1800, herds numbering in the millions emerged in the new environment created by the climate change.

Some groups—such as the **Caddoan**-speaking Wichitas, Pawnees, and Arikaras—virtually abandoned their agricultural villages and became hunters. Others, such as the Hidatsas, split in two: a splinter group calling itself Crows went off permanently to the grasslands to hunt while the remainder stayed in their villages growing corn and tobacco. These and others who chose to continue their agricultural ways—the Mandans, for example—established a thriving trade with the hunters, exchanging vegetables and tobacco for fresh meat and other buffalo products.

The increase in buffalo not only provided a welcome resource for the Indians already on the Great Plains but also drew new populations to the area. As the climate farther north became unbearably severe, the Blackfeet and other Algonquin-speaking Indians swept down from the subarctic Northeast to hunt on the plains. These were soon followed by other northeastern groups fleeing the violence and disease that were becoming endemic in the Eastern Woodlands. Some groups, even war-weary Hurons and Haudenosaunee, came as small parties and sought adoption among Great Plains societies. Others came en masse. The **Lakotas**, for example, once the westernmost family of Siouan agriculturalists, were pushed onto the plains by continuing pressure from the east, but they maintained close relations with their **Dakota** neighbors in Minnesota, who continued to farm and harvest wild rice and other crops. This continued tie, like that between the Crows and Hidatsas, increased both the hunters' and the farmers' chances for survival in an ever-more hostile world by expanding available resources. Intergroup trade became the key to the welfare of all.

One unintentional outcome of the Pueblo Revolt was the liberation of thousands of Spanish horses. The Pueblos had little use for these animals, but their trading partners, the Kiowas and Comanches, quickly adopted them. Horses could carry much larger loads than dogs were able to carry and could survive on a diet of grass rather than taking a share of the meat. In less than a generation, horses became a mainstay of the buffalo-hunting cultures on the southern plains. And from there, horses spread quickly to other hunting people.

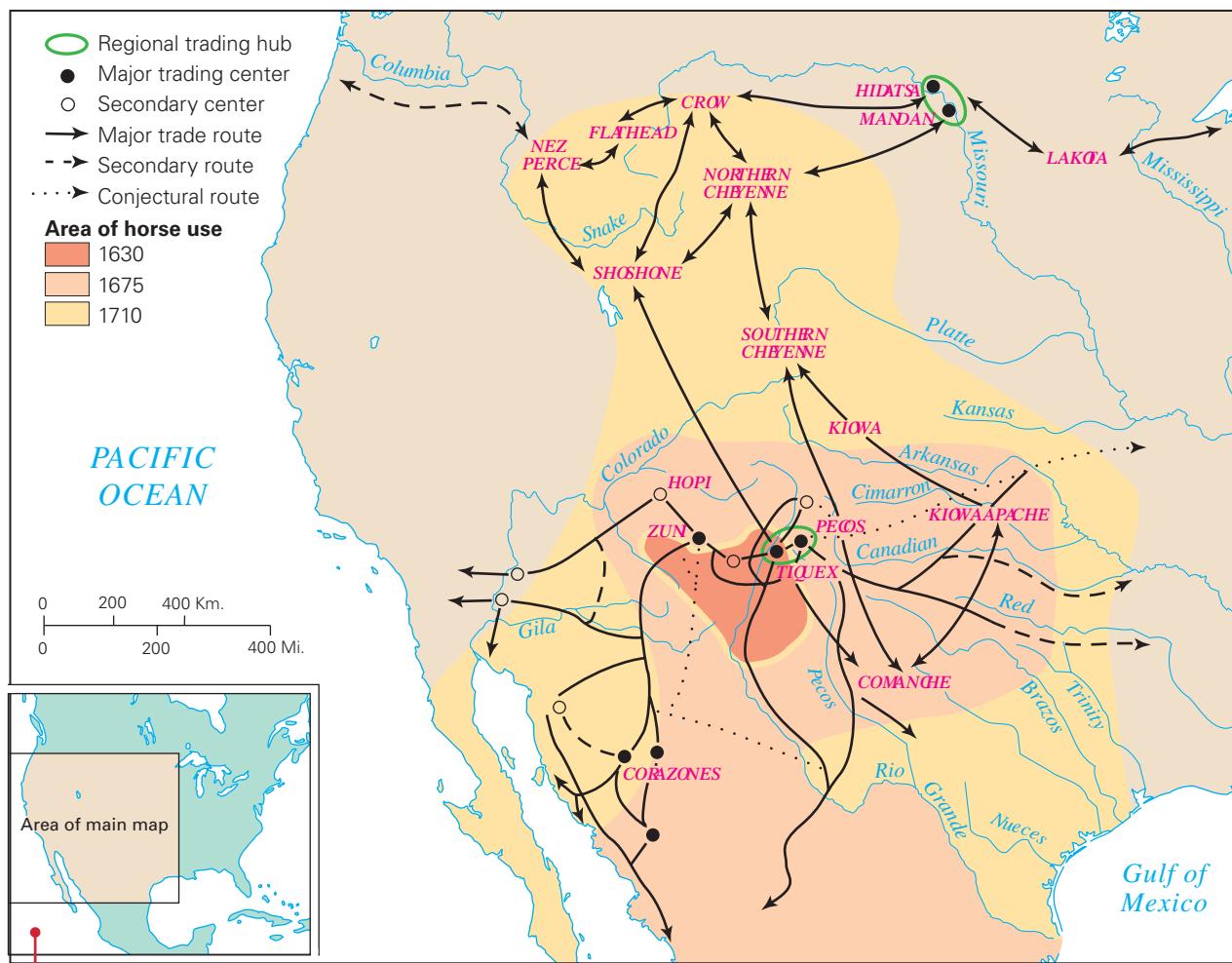
Northern plains dwellers such as the Shoshones quickly began acquiring horses from their southwestern kinsmen. Following a northward path along the eastern flank of the Rocky Mountains, horses were passed from one group to another in the complex trading system that had come into existence in the plains region. Well adapted to grasslands, virtually free from natural predators or diseases, and highly prized and thus well protected by their new human owners, horses greatly increased in number. By 1730, virtually all of the plains hunting peoples had some horses and were clamoring for more.

The steady demand for horses and hunting grounds created a new dynamic on the Great Plains and set a new economy into motion (see Map 2.2). After the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico, Indians could obtain horses only through warfare and trade, and

**buffalo** The American bison, a large member of the ox family, native to North America and the staple of the Plains Indian economy between the fifteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

**Caddoan** A family of languages spoken by the Wichitas, Pawnees, Arikaras, and other Plains Indians.

**Lakotas/Dakotas** Subgroups of the Sioux Nation of Indians; Lakotas make up the western branch, living mostly on the Great Plains; Dakotas, the eastern branch, live mostly in the prairie and lakes region of the Upper Midwest.



**MAP 2.2** Intergroup Trading on the Plains

Although movies portray Plains Indians as unsophisticated hunters and warriors, Native American societies in America's midsection maintained extremely complex and cosmopolitan trading networks. As this map shows, trade routes that existed before Europeans entered the region acquired added importance in distributing the novel technologies and ideas that the newcomers brought with them. The most important of these was horses, which were passed very quickly from group to group along these trade routes.

both increased significantly. Surprise raids to steal horses from neighboring Indian groups and European settlements brought both honor and wealth to those who were successful.

## Conquest and Accommodation in a Shared New World

- ★ **What forces shaped the day-to-day lives of settlers in New Mexico, Louisiana, and New Netherland?**
- ★ **How did settlers and American Indians adapt to changing conditions in the different regions of colonial occupation?**

Old World cultures, Native American historical dynamics, and New World environmental conditions combined to create vibrant new societies in European pioneer settlements. Despite the regulatory efforts of Spanish bureaucrats, French royal officials, and Dutch

company executives, life in the colonies developed in its own peculiar ways. Entire regions in what would become the United States assumed cultural contours that would shape all future developments in each.

### New Spain's Northern Frontiers

Life along New Spain's northern fringe was punctuated by friction between the empire's highly organized official structure and the disorderliness common to frontier settings. For the Spanish, notions of civil order were rooted in the local community—city, town, or village—and its ruling elite. Responsibility for maintaining order belonged to the *cabildo secular*, the municipal town council composed of members of the elite or their appointees. Spain established towns in all of its New World colonies and immediately turned over local authority to a ruling *cabildo*. This practice was usually successful in Mexico and Peru, but in the desert of New Mexico, the *cabildo* system was at odds with environmental and cultural conditions.

After suppressing the Pueblo Revolt during the 1690s, Spaniards began drifting back into New Mexico. Unlike areas to the South, New Mexico offered no rich deposits of gold or silver, and the climate was unsuitable for large-scale agriculture; the most rewarding economic enterprise in the region was ranching. The small flocks of sheep abandoned by the fleeing Spanish grew dramatically. By the time the Spanish returned, sheep ranching had become a reliable way to make a living. Thus, rather than concentrating near the municipal center in Santa Fe, the population in New Mexico spread out across the land, forming two sorts of communities. South of Santa Fe, people settled on scattered ranches. Elsewhere, they gathered in small villages along streams and pooled their labor to make a living from irrigated **subsistence farming**.

Like colonists elsewhere in Spain's New World empire, the New Mexico colonists were almost entirely male. Isolated on sheep ranches or in small villages, these men sought Indian companionship and married into local populations. These marriages gave birth not only to a new hybrid population but also to lines of kinship, trade, and authority that were in sharp contrast to the imperial ideal. For example, when Navajo or Apache raiding parties struck, ranchers and villagers turned to their Indian relatives for protection rather than to Spanish officials in Santa Fe. In this frontier world, a man's social status came to depend less on his Spanish connections than on his ability to work effectively in the complicated world of kinship that prevailed in the Indian community. The people who eventually emerged as the elite class in New Mexico were those who best perfected these skills.

**subsistence farming** Farming that produces enough food for survival but no surplus that can be sold.

### The Dutch Settlements

The existence of Rensselaerswyck and other great landed estates made it seem as though the New Netherland colony was prosperous and secure, but it actually was neither. Few of the wealthy stockholders in the Dutch West India Company wanted to trade their lives as successful gentleman investors for a pioneering existence on a barely tamed frontier. The economy in Holland was booming, and only the most desperate or adventurous wanted to leave. But having no one to pay their way, even the few who were willing were hard-pressed to migrate to the colony.

Desperate to draw settlers, the Dutch West India Company created an alternative to patroonship, agreeing to grant a tract of land to any free man who would agree to farm it. This offer appealed to many groups in Europe who were experiencing hardship in their own countries but who, for one reason or another, were unwelcome in the colonies of their homelands. French Protestants, for example, were experiencing terrible persecution in France but were forbidden from going to Canada or Louisiana. Roman Catholics, Quakers, Jews, Muslims, and a wide variety of others also chose to migrate to New Netherland.

**bosch loopers** Dutch term meaning “woods runners”; independent Dutch fur traders.

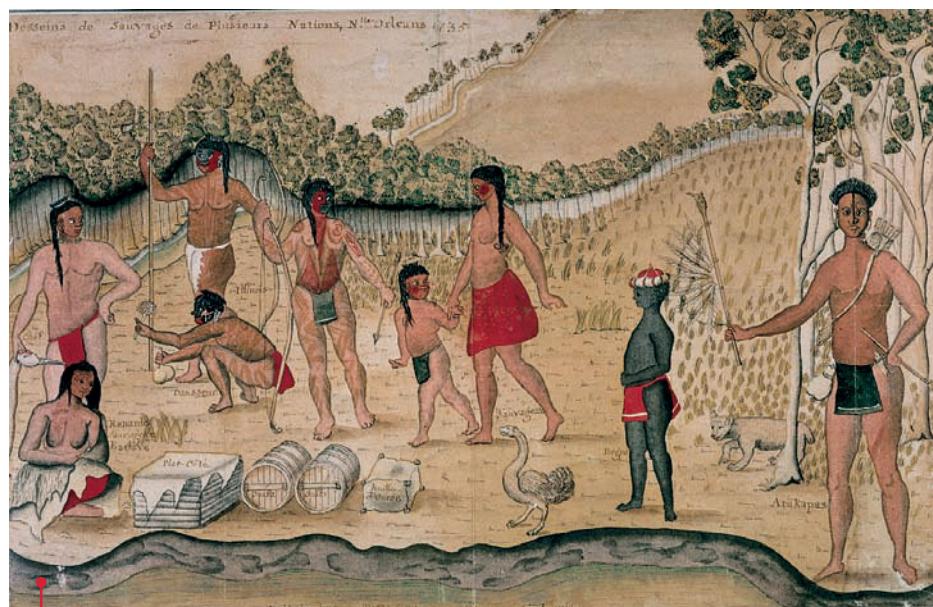
**Dutch Reform Church** Calvinistic Protestant denomination; the established church in the Dutch Republic and the official church in New Netherland.

Farming was the dominant activity among these emigrants, but some followed the example of the French *courreurs de bois* and went alone or in small groups into the woods to live and trade with the Indians. These travelers, called **bosch loopers**, traveled through the forests, trading brandy and rum for the Indians’ furs, which they then sold for enormous profits.

In fact, the Dutch West India Company was unable to control much of anything in New Netherland. The incredible diversity of the settlers no doubt contributed to this administrative impotence. For example, Dutch law and company policy dictated that the **Dutch Reform Church** was to be the colony’s official and only religion. But instead of drawing everyone into one congregation, the policy had the opposite effect. As late as 1642, not a single church of any denomination had been planted. Poor leadership and unimaginative policies also contributed to the general air of disorder. Following Peter Minuit’s dismissal by the company in 1631, a long line of incompetent governors ruled the colony. In the absence of any legislative assembly or other local body to help keep matters on track, for years one bad decision followed another. It took a major reorganization by the West India Company and its appointment of Peter Stuyvesant in 1645 to turn the colony around.

### Life in French Louisiana

France’s colony in Louisiana had many of the same qualities and faced many of the same problems as Holland’s and Spain’s North American possessions. Like most European settlements, Louisiana suffered from a critical shortage of



The French had difficulty persuading settlers to come to their New World province in Louisiana. As a result, the region’s development depended on a mixture of various European refugees, native Indians, and imported Africans for labor. Alexander de Batz’s 1735 painting gives us a good idea of what the population around New Orleans looked like at that time. As in neighboring New Mexico, a multiracial and multicultural society emerged in Louisiana that left a permanent legacy in the region. Peabody Museum, Harvard University 41-72-10/20 T2377.

labor, leading first to dependence on the Indians and eventually to the wholesale adoption of African slavery. And Louisianans, like all Europeans who settled in North America, found themselves embroiled in a complicated Native American world that usually defied European understanding.

The **Natchez**, **Chickasaws**, and **Choctaws** were all close by and well provisioned. The Chickasaws refused to deal with the French, and the Natchez, divided into quarreling factions, were sometimes helpful and sometimes hostile. But the Choctaws, locked into a war with the Chickasaws and a tense relationship with the Natchez, found the prospect of an alliance with the French quite attractive. In the realignment process, the Choctaws helped shape France's Indian policies and expansion plans. For example, they were able to convince the French to expand onto Natchez land rather than in Choctaw territory. When the Natchez resisted French incursion, the Choctaws helped their European allies destroy the tribe. The Choctaws also assisted the French in a thirty-year-long conflict with the Chickasaws, although with less success.

Despite the Choctaw alliance, which guaranteed ample food supplies and facilitated territorial acquisitions, Louisiana remained unappealing to Frenchmen. Although local officials advised against it, the French government finally resorted to recruiting paupers, criminals, and religious or political refugees from Central Europe and elsewhere to people the new land. But even with these newcomers, labor was inadequate to ensure survival, much less prosperity. Increasingly, settlers in Louisiana followed their Spanish neighbors' example by importing African slaves to do necessary work. By 1732, slaves made up two-thirds of the population.

As unappealing as the colony was to Frenchmen, it was even more so to French women. As a result, French men, like their Spanish neighbors, married Indians and, later, African slaves, creating a hybrid **creole** population that would come to dominate the region and set its cultural tone.

**Natchez** An urban, mound-building Indian people who lived on the lower Mississippi River until they were destroyed in a war with the French in the 1720s; survivors joined the Creek Confederacy.

**Chickasaws** An urban, mound-building Indian people who lived on the lower Mississippi River and became a society of hunters after the change in climate and introduction of disease after 1400; they were successful in resisting French aggression throughout the colonial era.

**Choctaws** Like the Chickasaws, a mound-building people who became a society of hunters after 1400; they were steadfast allies of the French in wars against the Natchez and Chickasaws.

**creole** In colonial times, a term referring to anyone of European or African heritage who was born in the colonies; in Louisiana, refers to the ethnic group resulting from intermarriage by people of mixed languages, races, and cultures.

## Summary

Spain's opening ventures in the Americas had been wildly successful, making the Iberian kingdom the envy of the world. Hoping to cash in on the bounty, other European nations challenged Spain's monopoly on American colonization, creating an outward explosion. Although slow to consolidate an imperial presence in North America, England was the first to confront the Spanish in force, wounding them severely. France and the Netherlands took advantage of the situation to begin building their own American empires.

Presented with this new challenge, Indians sought new ways to solve their problems and created altogether new societies. This often involved difficult choices: perhaps allying with the newcomers, resisting them, or fleeing. As different groups exercised varying options, the

outcome was a historically dynamic world of interaction involving all of the societies that were coming together in North America. In New Spain, New France, Louisiana, New Netherland, and throughout the Great Plains, truly cosmopolitan societies emerged. These new transatlantic societies, bearing cultural traits and material goods from throughout the world, set the tone for future development in North America. As we will see in Chapter 3, societies on the Atlantic coast, too, were evolving as English colonists interacted with the land and its many occupants. The outcome of such interchange, over the centuries, was the emergence of a multicultural, multiethnic, and extraordinarily rich culture—an essential element in Making America.

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Hernando Cortés, p. 29  
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# Founding the English Mainland Colonies

## 1585–1732

# CHAPTER 3

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Nathaniel Bacon

In 1674, a charismatic young Englishman named Nathaniel Bacon arrived in Virginia. He bought a large plantation near Jamestown and a tract of land on the frontier, and he was quickly appointed to Governor William Berkeley's advisory council. Yet, within two years, Bacon had become the leader of a rebellion of poor farmers that almost toppled the government.

Bacon could have lived out his days comfortably among the planter elite. Why, then, did he become a rebel? He arrived in Virginia at a tense moment when the colony's backcountry farmers' dream of prosperity was threatened by drought, Indian raids, a drop in the price of tobacco, and the Berkeley administration's unfair taxing policies. When Susquehannocks attacked, Bacon sympathized with these farmers. When they attacked his own frontier farm, he threw in his lot with his neighbors.

Bacon demanded that the Governor raise a militia to rid the area of all Indians. The Governor refused—and Bacon took matters into his own hands. He raised a vigilante army and began a war against all nearby Indians, even the peaceful tribes. The enraged governor branded Bacon a traitor. Bacon quickly struck back. Over five hundred men flocked to join "General" Bacon, and together they seized control of the colony's capital. By mid-October, Bacon's rebels controlled over two-thirds of Virginia. But on October 26, 1676, Nathaniel Bacon died of dysentery. Without his leadership, the revolution faltered and by spring of 1677, it had been crushed.

For the next hundred years, the royal governors and coastal planters dominated Virginia political life. To these elite colonists, Bacon symbolized a dangerous breakdown of law and order. To backcountry families, Bacon remained a frontier hero. But villain or hero, Nathaniel Bacon would not be the last colonist to fight against unfair treatment.

#### NATHANIEL BACON

*Nathaniel Bacon came to Virginia as a gentleman in the 1670s, but his resentment of the economic and political domination of the colony by a small group of planters transformed him into a backwoods rebel. In 1676, Bacon led an army of discontented farmers, servants, and slaves against the coastal planters—and almost won. In this stained glass window, Bacon's social class and commanding presence are both evident.*

Courtesy of The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### IT MATTERS TODAY: Grassroots Movements, Then and Now

#### *England and Colonization*

England's First Attempts at Colonization  
Turmoil and Tensions in England

#### *Settling the Chesapeake*

The Jamestown Colony  
Maryland: A Catholic Refuge  
Troubles on the Chesapeake  
Colonial Chesapeake Life

#### INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Nathaniel Bacon's "Declaration of the People"

#### *New England: Colonies of Dissenters*

The Plymouth Colony  
INVESTIGATING AMERICA:  
The Mayflower Compact  
Massachusetts Bay and Its Settlers  
Government in Puritan Massachusetts  
INVESTIGATING AMERICA:  
Anne Hutchinson  
Indian Suppression  
Change and Reaction in England and New England

#### *The Pluralism of the Middle Colonies*

From New Netherland to New York  
Leisler's Rebellion  
William Penn's Holy Experiment

#### *The Colonies of the Lower South*

The Carolina Colony  
Georgia, the Last Colony

#### *Summary*

# Chronology

<b>1585</b>	English colonize Roanoke Island	<b>1660</b>	Restoration of English monarchy
<b>1607</b>	Virginia Company founds Jamestown	<b>1663</b>	Carolina chartered
<b>1608</b>	Quebec City founded in New France	<b>1664</b>	New Netherland becomes New York
<b>1619</b>	Virginia House of Burgesses meets	<b>1675</b>	King Philip's War in New England
<b>1620</b>	Pilgrims found Plymouth Plantations	<b>1676</b>	Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia
<b>1625</b>	Charles I becomes king of England	<b>1681</b>	Pennsylvania chartered
<b>1630</b>	Puritans found Massachusetts Bay Colony	<b>1685</b>	James II becomes king of England
<b>1634</b>	Lord Baltimore establishes Maryland	<b>1686</b>	Dominion of New England established
<b>1635</b>	Roger Williams founds Providence	<b>1688</b>	Glorious Revolution in England
<b>1636</b>	Anne Hutchinson banished from Massachusetts; Pequot War in New England	<b>1689</b>	Leisler's Rebellion in New York
<b>1642–1648</b>	English civil war	<b>1691</b>	Massachusetts becomes royal colony
<b>1649</b>	Charles I executed; Cromwell and Puritans come to power in England	<b>1692</b>	Salem witch trials
<b>1655</b>	Civil war in Maryland	<b>1718</b>	French found the city of New Orleans
		<b>1732</b>	Georgia chartered

**B**acon's Rebellion reflects many of the contradictions of the early colonial period: the determination to create new communities and the willingness to uproot Native American communities in the process; the sense of new opportunities for success and the continuing influence of wealth and social prestige in a frontier world; and the challenge of creating a unified society in the face of the conflicting economic interests of coastal planters and backcountry farmers.

The seventeenth century saw thousands of English men and women risk the dangers of the Atlantic crossing, the hardships of frontier life, the threat of violence from other settlers and local Indians, and the often overwhelming sense of isolation that were all part of the colonizing experience. What motivated them? Many left England to escape discrimination and harassment because of their dissenting religious views. Puritans, Catholics, and Quakers all felt compelled to resist demands for allegiance to the Church of England. These English religious radicals were not alone in seeking freedom of worship. Jews, French Protestants, and German Pietists also came to America to escape persecution.

Still other colonists faced the difficult choice of poverty or flight. The economic transformation of England from a feudal society to a market society disrupted the lives of the country's rural population of tenant farmers. Thrown off their land as wealthy landlords turned to raising sheep, thousands of these victims of an emerging capitalism became nomads and vagabonds, traveling from country towns to seaport cities in search of work. Desperation drove them to sign away several years of their lives to a ship captain or a plantation owner in exchange for passage to America.

But if desperation prompted them to leave England, dreams and expectations often motivated them, too. These young men and women agreed to years of servitude and



# It Matters Today

## GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS: THEN AND NOW

Bacon's Rebellion is one of the first instances of a grassroots movement in American history. These movements often give voice to people who feel they are not being heard by the government on important issues. Many things we take for granted today began as demands by grassroots movements, including the end to slavery, the direct election of senators, and women's suffrage. The antiwar movement of the 1960s, the environmental movement of the 1990s, and the antismoking movement of today are recent examples of grassroots movements. Often grassroots movements provide

insights into changing values in American society and, equally often, they arise as part of a cluster of reform movements.

- Research a modern grassroots movement. What tactics has it employed to win support? How successful do you think these tactics have been?
- Do you think grassroots protest is a valuable part of the American political process today, or do we have institutions and political processes that make such protests unnecessary?

backbreaking labor in the tobacco fields of the **Chesapeake**, without wages and with the most meager rations, because they hoped to acquire land when they were released from bondage. The promise of land was perhaps the most powerful appeal to more fortunate colonists as well. Families of modest means sold off their belongings and said their good-byes to familiar faces and a familiar landscape, determined to build new and more independent lives for themselves in the colonies.

Colonists recorded their experiences in diaries, letters, and reports to government, church, or trading company officials. These accounts dramatize the hardships and risks that settlers confronted and testify that many did not survive. Ships carrying colonists sank in ocean storms. Diseases unknown in England decimated settlements. Poor planning and simple ignorance of survival techniques destroyed others. Conflicts with local Indian populations produced violence, bloodshed, and atrocities on both sides. And though colonists lived far from the seats of power in Europe, the rivalries between English, French, Dutch, and Spanish governments spilled across the ocean, erupting in border raids and full-scale wars throughout the century.

**Chesapeake** The Chesapeake was the common term for the two colonies of Maryland and Virginia, both of which border on Chesapeake Bay.

## England and Colonization

- ★ **What was the impact of the failure of the Roanoke Colony on England's colonizing effort?**
- ★ **What circumstances or conditions in England prompted people to migrate to America?**

By the end of the century, twelve distinct colonies hugged the Atlantic coastline of English America. The thirteenth, Georgia, was founded in 1732. Although each colony had its own unique history, climate and geography produced four distinct regions: New England, the Middle Colonies, the Chesapeake, and the Lower South. The colonies within each region shared a common economy and labor system, or a similar religious heritage, or a special character that defined the population, such as ethnic diversity. And by the

end of the century, certain institutions emerged in every colony. Whether its founders had been religious refugees or wealthy businessmen, each colony developed a representative assembly, established courts, and built houses of worship. Carolinians may have thought they shared little in common with the people of Connecticut, but both sets of colonists were subject to English law, English trade policies, and English conflicts with rival nations. Separate, yet linked to one another and to what they affectionately called the “Mother Country” in crucial ways, between 1607 and 1700 the colonies transformed themselves from struggling settlements to complex societies.

### England's First Attempts at Colonization

In July 1584, two ships entered the calm waters between the barrier islands and the mainland of North Carolina. On board was a group of Englishmen, sent by the wealthy nobleman

Walter Raleigh with orders to reconnoiter the area and locate

a likely spot for settlement. The men were impressed by the forest of cypress, pines, and flowering dogwood rising up from the sandy shores. The exhausted travelers could not fail to see the contrast between this exotic, lush environment, seemingly untamed by human efforts, and the carefully cultivated farmlands and pastures of their native land. But if they were awed, they were not naive. To protect themselves from unseen dangers, each man wore a suit of armor and carried weapons. Sometime that afternoon, the Englishmen got their first glimpse of the local population as three Croatans approached in a canoe. Despite all that they had read, and the many sketches they had seen, the Englishmen found them strange to behold, dressed as they were in loincloths, their bodies decorated with tattoos and adorned with necklaces and bracelets of shells. The Indians were equally astonished by the sight of strangers, encased in heavy metal on a humid summer’s day.

The encounter passed without incident. Within a month, the Englishmen were gone, returning to make their report to Raleigh. But the following year, a new group of Englishmen sank anchor off the North Carolina shore. These men, many of them soldiers, settled on Roanoke Island. Among them was a 25-year-old historian, surveyor, and cartographer, Thomas Harriot, who published his remarkable account of his nation’s first colonizing attempt, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, in 1588. In his account, Harriot described the Indians the colonists encountered but failed to report the almost immediate clashes between natives and invaders. The Englishmen’s unshakable sense of superiority, despite their dependence on the Indians for food, destroyed the possibility of cooperation. Before the year was over, Harriot and his shipmates returned to England.

Raleigh tried a second time in 1587, spending most of his remaining fortune to send over a hundred colonists to the area. Unfortunately, war with Spain made it impossible for Raleigh to send supplies to his colony for over three years. When a ship finally did reach the colony, the men on board could find no trace of the colonists. Instead they found abandoned ruins, and a single word carved into the bark of a nearby tree: “Croatan.” Whether the Roanoke colonists had fled from attack by the Croatans, or been rescued by them in the face of starvation or some other natural disaster, such as a severe drought, no one knows. News of the Roanoke mystery spread rapidly. So too did news that Raleigh had lost his entire fortune in his attempts at colonization, discouraging others from following his lead.

### Turmoil and Tensions in England

Although no one was willing to risk personal fortune on colonizing America, many English aristocrats believed the country needed to get rid of its growing population of impoverished men and women. Pamphlets suggested that the

solution to crime was to find a dumping ground for the thousands who had been displaced by the changing economy—desperate people without money or shelter. As farmlands were turned into pastures for sheep that supplied the new woolens industries, the resentful evicted farmers carried signs reading “Sheep Eat Men.”

The kings and their advisers also worried about the unrest stirred by growing demands for religious reform within the **Church of England**. The movement to “purify” the church had grown steadily, led by those who believed it had kept too many Catholic rituals despite its claim to be Protestant. For the seventeenth-century monarchs, the Stuart kings, this Puritan criticism smacked of treason because the king was not only leader of the nation but also head of the Anglican Church. Mistrust between Puritan reformers and the Crown grew under King James I and his son Charles I, for both men were rumored to be secretly practicing Catholicism.

There were other tensions in English society in the early decades of the century. A political struggle between the Crown and the legislative branch of the English government, the **Parliament**, was building to a crisis. In 1642 a civil war erupted, bringing together many of the threads of discontent and conflict. A Puritan army led by Oliver Cromwell overthrew the monarchy and, in 1649 took the radical step of executing King Charles I. Cromwell’s success established the supremacy of the Parliament. For almost a dozen years, the nation was a Commonwealth—a republic dominated by Puritans, merchants, and gentry rather than noblemen. Cromwell headed the government until his death in 1658, but to many English citizens his rule was as dictatorial as an absolute monarch’s. In 1660 the Stuart family was invited to take the throne once again. For twenty-five years, a period called the **Restoration**, Charles II ruled the nation. But when the Crown passed to his brother James II, an avowed Catholic, a second revolution occurred. This time, no blood was shed in England. James fled to France, and his Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch husband, William, came to the English throne. This **Glorious Revolution** of 1688 ended almost a century of political, ideological, and economic instability. By then, twelve American colonies were already perched on the mainland shores.

**Church of England** The Protestant church established in the sixteenth century by King Henry VIII as England’s official church; also known as the Anglican Church.

**Parliament** The lawmaking branch of the English government, composed of the House of Lords, representing England’s nobility, and the House of Commons, an elected body of untitled English citizens.

**Restoration** The era following the return of monarchy to England, beginning in 1660 with King Charles II and ending in 1688 with the exile of King James II.

**Glorious Revolution** A term used to describe the removal of James II from the English throne and the crowning of the Protestant monarchs, William and Mary.

## Settling the Chesapeake

- ★ **What were the goals of the Virginia Company and of the Calvert family in creating their Chesapeake colonies? Did the colonies achieve these goals?**
- ★ **What events illustrate the racial, class, and religious tensions in the Chesapeake?**

Fears of financial ruin had prevented any Englishman from following in Raleigh’s footsteps. But English **entrepreneurs** had developed a new method of financing high-risk ventures—the **joint-stock company**—and it was soon applied to planting colonies. In a joint-stock company, investors joined together and purchased shares in a venture. Any profits had to be shared by all; likewise, any losses would be absorbed by all. In 1603 both the Plymouth Company and the London Company asked King James I for a charter to settle Virginia. The king agreed to both requests.

The Plymouth Company chose a poor site for its colony, however. The rocky coast of Maine proved uninviting to the settlers, and sickness and Indian attacks soon sent the survivors scurrying home to England. In December 1606, the London Company (now calling itself simply the Virginia Company) sent its first colonists far to the south of the ill-fated Maine colony. Here, near the Chesapeake Bay, they would create the first successful English colony in America.

**entrepreneur** A person who organizes and manages a business enterprise that involves risk and requires initiative.

**joint-stock company** A business financed through the sale of shares of stock to investors; the investors share in both the profits and losses from a risky venture.

**Jamestown** First permanent English settlement in mainland America, established in 1607 by the Virginia Company and named in honor of King James I.

### The Jamestown Colony

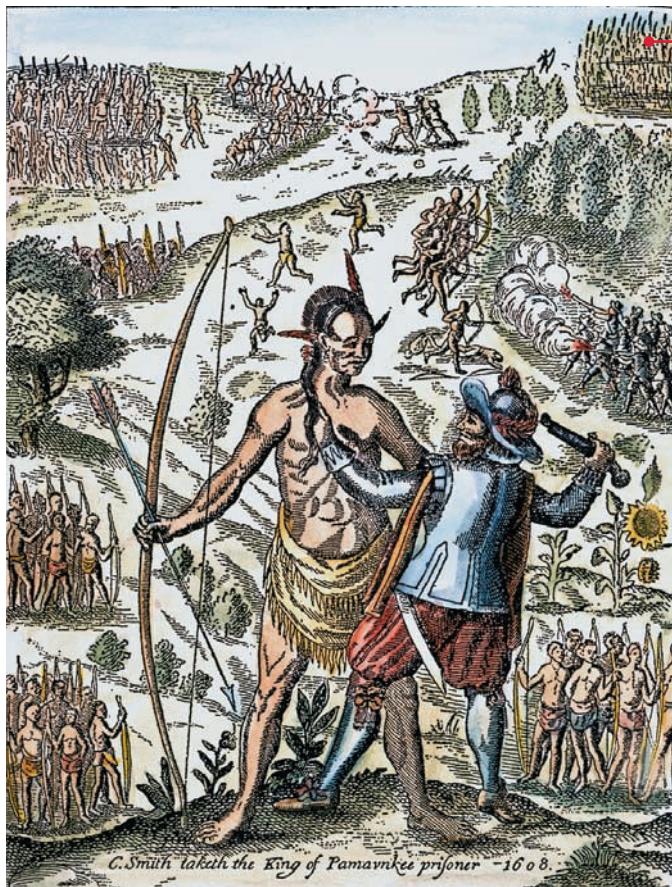
The 105 men and boys sent by the Virginia Company aboard the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery* had been tossed on the Atlantic waters for over five months when at last they entered the calm waters of the Chesapeake Bay and made their way up a river they named the James in honor of their king. Happy at last to feel dry land under their feet, the men disembarked on a small peninsula that jutted out into the river. They called their settlement **Jamestown**.

The early years of this Jamestown colony were a seemingly endless series of survival challenges. The colonists discovered, too late, that they had encamped in an unhealthy spot. Summer brought intense heat, and the men were attacked by swarms of insects, bred in the wetlands that surrounded them. The water of the James was polluted by ocean salt water, making it dangerous to drink. One by one, the settlers fell ill, suffering typhus, malaria, or dysentery. Few of the men had any experience in wilderness survival. Most were gentlemen adventurers, hoping to discover gold and other precious metals just as the Spanish had in Central America. These adventurers, as one Englishman put it, “never knew what a day’s labour meant.” They assumed that they could enslave the local Indians and force them to do all the work.

Had they known more about the local Indians, they might not have relied on this solution. The Powhatan Confederacy, made up of some thirty Algonquin-speaking tribes on the coastal plains, was a powerful force in the Indian world of the east coast of North America. The chief of the Powhatans had forged this confederacy in the 1570s, in response to Spanish attempts at colonization. When the English arrived, the confederacy was led by Wahunsonacock, who effectively controlled tidewater Virginia and the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay. Although Wahunsonacock’s Powhatan tribe had only about forty warriors, he could count on the assistance of some three thousand others, drawn from member tribes such as the Pamunkeys, Mattaponis, and Arrohatecks. Although the English adventurers expended their energies on a futile search for gold rather than on building shelters or stockpiling food for the winter, the Indians harvested their corn—and waited to see what this group of Europeans would do.

Lacking any farming skills, disorganized, and unaccustomed to following orders or working hard, the colonists soon faced disease, starvation, and exposure to the elements. Temporary relief came when John Smith took command. Although overconfident and self-centered, Smith did have some survival knowledge and knew how to discipline men. He established a “no work, no food” policy and negotiated with the Powhatans for corn and other supplies. When Smith left in 1609, the discipline and order he had established quickly collapsed. The original colonists and those who joined them the following spring remembered that winter as “the starving time.” The desperate colonists burned their housing to keep warm and ate dogs, cats, mice, snakes, even shoe leather in their struggle to survive. Only sixty settlers were alive at winter’s end.

Across the Atlantic, the Virginia Company seemed caught in an investor’s nightmare, pumping good money after bad in hopes of delaying a total collapse of the colony. But tobacco, a weed native to the Americas, proved to be the colony’s salvation. Pipe smoking had been a steady habit in England since the mid-sixteenth century, and Englishmen were a reliable market for this “brown gold.” The local strain of tobacco in Virginia was too harsh for English tastes, but one of the colonists, an enterprising young planter named John Rolfe, managed to transplant a milder strain of West Indian tobacco to the colony. This success changed Rolfe’s life, earning him both wealth and the admiration of his neighbors. Rolfe made a second contribution to the colony soon afterward, easing the strained Indian-white relationships by his marriage to Pocahontas, who John Smith insisted had saved his life.



The relationship between the Powhatans and the Virginia colonists deteriorated quickly, despite early signs of cooperation. In this engraving, the adventurer and mercenary John Smith, who claimed to have once been saved by Pocahontas, is shown capturing a Powhatan warrior. Note the difference in weaponry used by the two opponents. The Granger Collection, New York.

By 1612, the Virginia Colony settlers engaged in a mad race to plant and harvest as many acres of tobacco as possible. Yet, the Virginia Company was unable to take full advantage of this unexpected windfall, for it had changed its policies in an effort to ease its financial burdens. In the beginning the company owned all the land but also bore all the costs of colonization. But by 1618, the company's new policy allowed individual colonists to own land if they paid their own immigration expenses. This **head right system** granted each male colonist a deed for 50 acres of land for himself and for every man, woman, or child whose voyage he financed. In this way the Virginia Company shifted the cost of populating and developing the colony to others. But the head rights also ended the company's monopoly on the suddenly valuable farmland.

Other important concessions to the colonists soon followed. The military-style discipline instituted by Smith and continued by later leaders was abandoned. At the same time, a measure of self-government was allowed. In 1619 the company created an elected, representative lawmaking body called the **House of Burgesses**, which gave the landholders—tobacco planters—of Virginia some control over local political matters. In effect, a business enterprise had finally become a colonial society.

The Virginia Company did retain one of the colony's earliest traditions—a bad relationship with the Powhatans. By 1622, the English seemed to have the upper hand, for the population had grown and tobacco had brought a measure of prosperity. As Virginia planters pressed farther inland, seizing Indian land along local rivers, the new Powhatan chief, Opechanacanough, decided to strike back. On what the Christian settlers called

**head right system** The grant of 50 acres of land for each settler brought over to Virginia by a colonist.

**House of Burgesses** The elected lawmaking body of Virginia, established by the Virginia Company; the assembly first met in 1619.

Good Friday, he mounted a deadly attack on Jamestown, killing a quarter of the colonists in a single day. The company responded as quickly as it could, sending weapons to the Virginians. For two years, war raged between Indians and the English. Although the bloodshed became less frequent by 1625, a final peace was not reached for a decade. By that time, disease and violence had taken its toll on the Powhatans. Once over forty thousand strong, they had dwindled to fewer than five hundred people.

The Good Friday Massacre, as the English called it, brought important changes for the colony. King James I had already begun an investigation of the Virginia Company's management record. By 1624, only 1,275 of the 8,500 settlers who had arrived since 1607 remained alive. When James learned of the renewed conflict between Indians and colonists, he decided to take action. The king took away the company's charter and declared Virginia to be a royal possession.

### Maryland: A Catholic Refuge

As Virginians spread out along the riverways of their colony, searching for good tobacco land, plans for a second Chesapeake colony were brewing in England. The man behind this project was not a merchant or entrepreneur, and profit was

not his motive. George Calvert, a wealthy Catholic who King Charles I had just made Lord Baltimore, was motivated by a strong concern about growing harassment and discrimination against England's dwindling number of Catholics. He envisioned a religious refuge in America for members of his faith. Calvert acquired a charter from the king that granted him a generous tract of land east and north of Chesapeake Bay. Here, he planned to establish a highly traditional society, dominated by powerful noblemen and populated by obedient tenant farmers.

Calvert died before a single colonist could be recruited for his Maryland. But his oldest son, Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, took on the task of establishing the colony. To Calvert's surprise, few English Catholics showed any enthusiasm for the project. When the first boatload of colonists sailed up the Chesapeake Bay in 1634, most of these two hundred volunteers were young Protestants seeking a better life. Calvert wisely adopted the head right system developed by the Virginia Company to attract additional settlers. The lure of land ownership, he realized, was the key to populating Maryland.

Calvert's colony quickly developed along the same lines as neighboring Virginia. Marylanders turned to planting the profitable **staple crop**, tobacco, and joined the scramble for good riverfront land. Like the Virginians, these colonists used trickery and violence to pry acres of potential farmland from resisting Indians. By midcentury, the Chesapeake colonies could claim a modest prosperity, even though their populations grew slowly. But they could not claim a peaceful existence. The political crises that shook England during the mid-seventeenth century sent shock waves across the Atlantic Ocean to the American shores. These crises intertwined with local tensions among colonists, or between colonists and Indians, to produce rebellions, raids, and civil wars.

### Troubles on the Chesapeake

In Maryland, tensions ran high between the Catholic minority, who had political influence beyond their numbers because of Lord Baltimore's support, and the Protestant majority in the colony. But with the rise to power of the Puritan leader

Cromwell and his Commonwealth government in England, Calvert realized that his power to protect Maryland's Catholics was in jeopardy. Hoping to avoid persecution of the Catholic colonists, Calvert offered religious toleration to all Marylanders. In 1649 he issued the innovative Toleration Act, protecting all Christians from being "troubled [or]

**staple crop** A basic or necessary agricultural item, produced for sale or export.

molested" in respect to religion. Calvert's liberal policy offended the staunchly Puritan Cromwell, who promptly repealed the act. In 1654 the Puritan-dominated Parliament went further, seizing Maryland from the Calvert family and establishing a Protestant assembly in the colony. The outcome was exactly as Calvert had feared: a wave of anti-Catholic persecution swept over Maryland.

Within a year, a bloody civil war was raging in Maryland. Protestant forces won the fiercely fought Battle of the Severn, but their victory proved futile when Cromwell died and the monarchy was restored. Charles II returned Maryland to the Calvert family, who had always been loyal supporters of the Stuart dynasty. Despite this reversal of fortunes, Protestants in Maryland continued their struggle, organizing unsuccessful rebellions in 1659, 1676, and again in 1681. Then, in 1689, William and Mary ascended to the throne of England in the Glorious Revolution, and Maryland's Protestants rallied once again. Led by an unlikely looking hero, the stooped and crippled minister John Coode, colonists formed an army they called the Protestant Association. By 1691, Coode had persuaded the Crown to make Maryland a royal colony. The story did not end here, however. In 1715 the fourth Lord Baltimore gave up the Catholic faith and joined the Church of England. Maryland was once again returned to the Calverts.

Virginia was less affected by religious controversy than its neighbor. There, colonists were primarily Anglicans, although small communities of Quakers and Puritans were scattered throughout Virginia. Religious differences, however, did not spark hostilities. Instead, the fault lines in Virginia society developed between the wealthy planters of the tidewater region and the ambitious newcomers seeking to make their fortunes in the backcountry. This was the volatile atmosphere surrounding Bacon's rebellion, as described at the start of the chapter.

### Colonial Chesapeake Life

Every aspect of life in the Chesapeake colonies was shaped by tobacco. Its cultivation set rhythms of work and play that were dramatically different from those in England. Planting, tending, harvesting, and drying tobacco leaves took almost ten months of the year, beginning in late winter and ending just before Christmas. In the short period between the holiday and the start of a new planting cycle, Chesapeake planters, their families, and their servants worked frantically to catch up on other, neglected farm chores. They also compressed what meager social life they had into these winter weeks, engaging—whenever possible—in hasty courtships followed by marriage.

Because tobacco quickly exhausted the soil in which it grew, planters moved frequently to new acres on their estates or to newly acquired lands farther west. They rarely stayed in one place very long, so planters placed little value on permanent homes or on creating permanent social institutions such as schools. Throughout the century, Chesapeake colonists sacrificed many of the familiar forms of community life to the demands of their profitable crop.

Planters needed a labor force large enough and cheap enough to ensure their profits. As long as poverty and social unrest plagued England, they found the workers they needed from their homeland. Over 175,000 young, single, and impoverished immigrants flooded the Chesapeake during the seventeenth century, their passages paid by the ship captain or the planter. In exchange for their transatlantic voyage, these **indentured servants** worked for several years in the tobacco fields without pay. Planters preferred a male work force, for they shared the general European assumption that farming was a masculine activity. As a result, these colonies had an unusual population profile: men outnumbered women in most areas of Virginia and Maryland by 3 to 1. In some areas, the ratio was a remarkable 6 to 1 until the end of the century.

**indentured servants** People working out their compulsory service for a fixed period of time, usually from four to seven years, in exchange for passage to the colonies; a labor contract called an *indenture* spelled out the agreement.

# Investigating America

## Nathaniel Bacon's "Declaration of the People"

Nathaniel Bacon began his defiance of the colonial government with the objective of removing Indians from the backcountry of Virginia. Yet, Bacon soon found himself the leader of a civil war between backcountry farmers and servants on the one hand and the wealthy coastal planters and the royal governor on the other. Labeled a traitor by Governor Berkeley, Bacon defended himself and his actions in "The Declaration of the People." In it, he also listed his followers' many grievances against the governor.

If virtue be a sin, if piety be guilt, all the principles of morality, goodness and justice be perverted, we must confess that those who are now called rebels may be in danger of those high imputations. Those loud and several bulls would affright innocents and render the defense of our brethren and the inquiry into our sad and heavy oppressions, treason. But if there be, as sure there is, a just God to appeal to; if religion and justice be a sanctuary here; if to plead the cause of the oppressed; if sincerely to aim at his Majesty's honour and die public good without any reservation or by interest; if to stand in the gap after so much blood of our dear brethren bought and sold; if after the loss of a great part of his Majesty's colony deserted and dispeopled, freely with our lives and estates to endeavour to save the remainders be treason; God Almighty judge and let guilty die. But since we cannot in our hearts find one single spot of rebellion or treason, or that we have in any manner aimed at the subverting of the settled government or attempting of the person of any either magistrate or private man, notwithstanding the several reproaches and threats of some who for sinister ends were disaffected to us and censured our innocent and honest designs, and since all people in all places where we have yet been can attest our civil, quiet, peaceable behaviour far different from that of rebellion and tumultuous persons, let truth be bold and all the world know the real foundations of pretended guilt. We appeal to the country itself what and

of what nature their oppressions have been, or by what cabal and mystery the designs of many of those whom we call great men have been transacted and carried on; but let us trace these men in authority and favour to whose hands the dispensation of the country's wealth has been committed. Let us observe the sudden rise of their estates composed with the quality in which they first entered this country, or the reputation, they have held here amongst wise and discerning men. And let us see whether their extractions and education have not been vile, and by what pretence of learning and virtue they could so soon [come] into employments of so great trust and consequence. Let us consider their sudden advancement and let us also consider whether any public work for our safety and defence or for the advancement and propagation of trade, liberal arts, or sciences is here extant in any way adequate to our vast charge. Now let us compare these things together and see what sponges have sucked up the public treasure, and whether it has not been privately contrived away by unworthy favourites and juggling parasites whose tottering fortunes have been repaired and supported at the public charge. Now if it be so, judge what greater guilt can be than to offer to pry into these and to unriddle the mysterious wiles of a powerful cabal; let all people judge what can be of more dangerous import than to suspect the so long safe proceedings of some of our grandes, and whether people may with safety open their eyes in so nice a concern.

- On what grounds did Bacon justify his attacks on the Indian population?
- What does the source suggest about how Bacon's revolt evolved into a class rebellion against the wealthy planters?
- What lessons might the royal governor and the planter class have drawn from this affair about the need to replace dangerous indentured labor?



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For these indentured servants, and often for their masters as well, life was short and brutal. They spent long, backbreaking days in the fields. Their food rations were meager, their clothing and bedding inadequate, and their shoulders frequently scarred by the master's whip. Some came to doubt that they would survive to win their freedom. Disease and malnutrition took the lives of perhaps a quarter of these bound laborers. Free colonists fared little better than servants. Typhus, dysentery, and malaria killed

thousands. Over one-quarter of the infants born in the Chesapeake did not live to see their first birthdays; another quarter of the population died before reaching the age of 20. Early death, the skewed ratio of men to women, and high infant mortality combined to create a demographic disaster that continued until the last decades of the century.

## New England: Colonies of Dissenters

- ★ **Why did English religious dissenters settle in New England?**
- ★ **How did the Puritan authorities deal with dissent?**

While Captain John Smith was barking orders at the settlers in Jamestown, some religious dissenters in a small English village were preparing to escape King James's wrath. These residents of Scrooby Village were people of modest means, without powerful political allies or a popular cause. But they had gone one step further than the majority of Puritans, who continued to be members of the Anglican Church despite their criticisms of it. The Scrooby villagers had left the church altogether, forming a separate sect of their own. James I despised these **separatists** and declared his intention to drive them out of England—or worse.

The Scrooby separatists took James's threats seriously. In 1611 they fled to the city of Leyden in the Netherlands. They saw themselves as **Pilgrims** on a spiritual journey to religious freedom. The Dutch welcomed them warmly, but several Pilgrims feared that the comfortable life they had found in Holland was diminishing their devotion to God. By 1620, **William Bradford** was leading a small group of these transplanted English men and women on a second pilgrimage—to America.

### The Plymouth Colony

The Leyden Pilgrims were joined by other separatists in England. Together, they set sail on an old, creaky ship called the *Mayflower*. On board, too, were a band of "strangers," outsiders to the religious sect who simply wanted passage to America.

Crammed together in close and uncomfortable quarters, they weathered a nightmare voyage of violent storms and choppy waters. After nine weeks at sea, the captain anchored the *Mayflower* at Cape Cod, almost 1,000 miles north of the original Virginia destination (see Map 3.1). The exhausted passengers did not complain; they fell to the ground to give thanks. Once the thrill of standing on dry land had passed, however, many of them sank into depression. The early winter landscape of New England was dreary and disturbingly empty. Bradford's own wife, Dorothy, may have committed suicide in the face of this bleak landscape.

Talk of setting sail for Virginia spread through the ranks of the ship's crew and the passengers. Mutiny was in the air. To calm the situation, Bradford negotiated an unusual contract with every man aboard the ship—Pilgrim, crew, servant, and stranger. Known as the **Mayflower Compact**, this document granted political rights to any man willing to remain and to abide by whatever laws the new colony enacted. Here was an unheard-of opportunity for poor men to participate in governing themselves. All agreed, and the new colony of Plymouth Plantations began to prepare for the long winter ahead.

In Plymouth Plantations, as in Virginia, the first winter brought sickness, hunger, and death. Half of the colonists did not survive. When **Squanto**, a Patuxet, came upon the remaining men and women in the spring of 1621, he found them huddled in flimsy shelters. Squanto sympathized with their confusion and their longings for home, for he

**separatists** English Protestants who chose to leave the Church of England because they believed it was corrupt.

**Pilgrims** A small group of separatists who left England in search of religious freedom and sailed to America on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

**William Bradford** The separatist who led the Pilgrims to America; he became the first governor of Plymouth Plantations.

**Mayflower Compact** An agreement drafted in 1620 when the Pilgrims reached America that granted political rights to all male colonists who would abide by the colony's laws.

**Squanto** A Patuxet who taught the Pilgrims' survival techniques in America and acted as translator for the colonists.

**MAP 3.1** The Colonies and Their Major Cities

The creation of the English mainland colonies spanned almost 125 years, from the first settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 to the founding of the last colony of Georgia in 1732. This map indicates the year each colony was founded, the type of charter governing it, and the date in which eight of these colonies came directly under royal control. The map also locates the major colonial cities in each region.



had crossed the Atlantic in 1605 aboard an English trading ship and spent several years in an alien environment. Ironically, the Pilgrims had settled where Squanto's own village had once stood. His entire family and tribe had been wiped out by diseases carried by English traders and fishermen.

Squanto helped the colonists, teaching them how to plant corn, squash, and pumpkins. Perhaps his greatest service, however, was in helping William Bradford negotiate a peace treaty with Massasoit, leader of the local Wampanoag Indians. The Wampanoags also agreed to spread the word to neighboring Indian communities that the Pilgrims were allies rather than enemies. The combined efforts of Squanto and Massasoit saved the Plymouth Colony, and in the fall of 1621, English settlers and Indian guests sat down together in a traditional harvest celebration of thanksgiving.

# Investigating America

## The Mayflower Compact

Although the original document was lost, the following transcription of the Mayflower Compact is taken from William Bradford's journal. In theory, the signers based their government on their allegiance to the king, but in reality the agreement was a social contract crafted by desperate settlers far from home in the name of survival.

In the name of God, Amen, We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid: And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and

convenient for the general Good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due Submission and Obedience. IN WITNESS whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape-Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, Anno Domini; 1620.

- Of the 102 settlers who set sail on the *Mayflower*, only the forty-one grown men signed the compact. What does the omission of women suggest about their view of a proper "Body Politick"?
- Even though many of those aboard the *Mayflower* were Calvinist critics of the English government, why might this document have pledged loyalty to King James I?
- To what extent did the ideas included here form the basis for future American governments?

Francis N. Thorpe, ed., *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies* (Washington, 1909).

### Massachusetts Bay and Its Settlers

A second colony soon appeared beside Plymouth Plantations. In 1629 a group of prosperous Puritans, led by the 41-year-old lawyer **John Winthrop**, secured a charter for their Massachusetts Bay Company from King Charles I. Increasing concern about the government's harassment of dissenters, coupled with a deepening economic depression in England, spurred these Puritans to set sail for New England. Advertising the colony as "a refuge for many who [God] means to save out of the general calamity," Winthrop had no trouble recruiting like-minded Puritans to migrate

From the beginning, the Massachusetts Bay Colony had several advantages over Jamestown and Plymouth Plantations. The colonists were well equipped and well prepared for their venture. The company had even sent an advance crew over to clear fields and build shelters. As religious tensions and economic distress increased in England, Massachusetts attracted thousands of settlers. This "**Great Migration**" continued until Oliver Cromwell's Puritan army took control of England.

Although profit motivated the Virginia colonists and a desire to worship in peace prompted the Pilgrims to sail to America, the Puritans were people with a mission. They hoped to create a model Christian community, a "city upon a hill" that would persuade all English men and women that the reforms they proposed in the Anglican Church were correct. Winthrop set out their mission in a speech to the passengers aboard the *Arabella*.



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**John Winthrop** One of the founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony and the colony's first governor.

**Great Migration** The movement of Puritans from England to America in the 1630s, caused by political and religious unrest in England.

“The eyes of all peoples are upon us,” Winthrop warned, and, more importantly, God was watching them as well. If they abandoned or forgot their mission, the consequences would surely include divine punishment.

This sense of mission influenced the physical as well as spiritual shape of the colony. Massachusetts colonists created tight-knit farming villages and small seaport towns in which citizens could monitor one another’s behavior as well as come together in prayer. This settlement pattern fit well with the realities of New England’s climate and terrain because the short growing season and the rocky soil made large, isolated plantations based on staple crops impossible. The colonists, homesick for English villages, did their best to reproduce familiar architecture and placement of public buildings. The result was a hub-and-spoke design, with houses tightly clustered around a village green, a church beside it, and most of the fields and farms within walking distance of the village center. This design set natural limits on the size of any village because beyond a certain point—usually measured in a winter’s walk to church—a farm family was considered outside the community circle. As a town’s population grew and the available farmland was farther from the green, settlers on the outer rim of the town chose to create a new community for themselves—a process that increasingly encroached on Indian lands.

Massachusetts and other New England settlements that followed were societies of families. Many, although not all, of the colonists arriving during the Great Migration

This statue of Anne Hutchinson portrays a courageous and determined woman. Massachusetts Bay’s Puritan officials, however, considered her a dangerous heretic who overstepped her proper place as a woman. Like Roger Williams, Hutchinson was exiled from the colony for her unorthodox views. Picture Research Consultants & Archives.



came as members of a family, so the gender ratio in the northern colonies was never dramatically skewed. On the whole, the number of men and women was roughly equal. And, unlike their Chesapeake counterparts, New Englanders never endured a demographic disaster. The cool temperatures and clean drinking water made the region a healthy place for Europeans, healthier than England itself. Infant mortality was low, and most children lived to marry and produce families of their own. A couple could expect to live a long life together and raise a family of five to seven children. One outcome of this longevity was a rare phenomenon in the seventeenth-century English world: grandparents.

Both Puritans and neighboring Pilgrims spoke of the family as “a little commonwealth,” the building block on which the larger society was constructed. A wife was expected to obey her husband. Puritan ministers reinforced this ideal of a **hierarchy**, or well-defined chain of command, within a family. “Wives,” they preached, “are part of the House and Family, and ought to be under a Husband’s Government: they should Obey their own Husbands.” A husband, however, was bound by sacred obligations to care for and be respectful toward his wife. Marriage involved many practical duties as well. Wives were expected to strive to be “notable housewives”—industrious, economical managers of resources and skilled at several crafts. They were to spin yarn, sew, cook, bake, and butcher farm animals. In close-knit New England communities, women were able to help one another by exchanging butter for eggs, assisting with a neighbor’s childbirth, or nursing the sick back to health. Husbands were expected to labor in the fields, or in the shop, in order to provide for their families.

Although obligated to be tender and loving, the husband controlled the resources of the family. This was true in all English colonies, although in the Chesapeake, a husband’s early death often left the wife in charge of the family farm and its profits until sons came of age. Under English law, a married woman, as a *femme couverte*, lost many of her legal rights because, in law, she came under the protection and governance of her husband. Married women could not acquire or sell property or claim the use of any wages they earned. They could gain such basic legal rights only through special contracts made with their husbands. Puritan communities, however, frowned on any such arrangements. In the “little commonwealth” of the family, a man was the undisputed head of the household and thus had authority over all its economic resources and all its members. He also represented the family’s interests in the realm of politics. No matter how wise or wealthy a woman might become, she was denied a political voice.

### Government in Puritan Massachusetts

To create the “city upon a hill,” the directors of the Massachusetts Bay Company needed, and expected, the full cooperation of all colonists. This did not mean that all colonists had an equal voice or an equal role in fulfilling this vision of a perfect community. The “wilderness Zion” was not intended to be an egalitarian society. Winthrop believed that it was natural and correct for some people to be rich and some to be poor—“some high and eminent in power and dignity, others mean and in subjugation.” Women, children, servants, young men, and adult men without property owed obedience to others in most English communities. But in Massachusetts, there were further limitations on participation. Not even all free males with property were granted a voice in governing the colony, and the qualifications for political participation in the representative assembly were dramatically different from those set by Maryland or Virginia. No man in Massachusetts had a full political voice unless he was an acknowledged church member, not just a churchgoer. Church membership, or **sainthood**, was granted only after a person testified to an experience of “saving grace,” a moment

**hierarchy** A system in which people or things are ranked above one another.

**femme couverte** From the French for “covered woman”; a legal term for a married woman; this legal status limited women’s rights, denying them the right to sue or be sued, own or sell property, or earn wages.

**sainthood** Full membership in a Puritan church.

of intense awareness of God's power and a reassuring conviction of personal salvation. Massachusetts made religious qualifications as important as gender or economic status in the colony's political life.

In the early decades of the colony, moreover, the Puritan sense of mission left little room for religious toleration. Colonial leaders saw no reason to welcome anyone who disagreed with their religious views. English America was large, they argued, and people of other faiths could settle elsewhere. Winthrop's government was particularly aggressive against members of a new sect called the **Quakers**, who came to Massachusetts on a mission of their own—to convert Puritans to their faith. Quakers entering the colony were beaten, imprisoned, or branded with hot irons. If they returned, they were hanged. Puritan leaders showed just as little tolerance toward members of their own communities who criticized or challenged the rules of the Bay Colony or the beliefs of its church. They drove out men and women who they perceived to be **heretics**, or religious traitors, including Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson.

Almost anyone could be labeled a heretic—even a popular Puritan minister. Only a year after the colony was established, the church at Salem made **Roger Williams** its assistant minister. His electrifying sermons and his impressive knowledge of Scripture attracted a devoted following. But he soon attracted the attention of local authorities as well, for his sermons were highly critical of the colonial government. From his pulpit, Williams condemned political leaders for seizing Indian land. He also denounced laws requiring church attendance. True religious faith, he said, was a matter of personal commitment. It could not be compelled. "Forced religion," he lectured his congregation, "stinks in God's nostrils."

In 1635 Winthrop's government banished Williams from the colony. Wading through deep snow, Williams left Salem and sought refuge with the Narragansett Indians. When spring came, many of his Salem congregation joined him in exile. Together, in 1635, they created a community called Providence that welcomed dissenters of all kinds, including Quakers, Jews, and Baptists. In 1644 the English government granted Williams a charter for his colony, which he eventually called Rhode Island. Within their borders, Rhode Islanders firmly established the principle of separation of church and state.

Soon after the Massachusetts authorities rid the colony of Roger Williams, a new challenge arose. In 1634 **Anne Hutchinson**, her husband, William, and their several children emigrated to Massachusetts. The Hutchinsons made an impressive addition to the colonial community. He was a successful merchant. She had received an exceptionally fine education from her father and was eloquent, witty, and well versed in Scripture. Like Williams, Hutchinson put little stock in the power of a minister or in any rules of behavior to assist an individual in the search for salvation. She believed that only God's grace could save a person's soul. And she declared that God made a "covenant of grace," or a promise of salvation, that did not depend on any church, minister, or worship service.

Hutchinson's opinions, aired in popular meetings at her home, disturbed the Puritan authorities. That she was a woman made her outspoken defiance even more shocking. Men like Winthrop believed that women ought to be silent in the church and had no business criticizing male authorities, particularly ministers and **magistrates**, or government officials. A surprising number of Puritans, however, were untroubled by Hutchinson's sex. Male merchants and craftsmen who lacked political rights because they were not members of the saintly elect welcomed her attacks on these authorities. Hutchinson also attracted Puritan saints who resented the tight grip of the colonial government on their business and personal lives.

**Quakers** Members of the Society of Friends, a radical Protestant sect that believed in the equality of men and women, pacifism, and the presence of a divine "inner light" in every individual.

**heretic** A person who does not behave in accordance with an established attitude, doctrine, or principle, usually in religious matters.

**Roger Williams** Puritan minister banished from Massachusetts for criticizing its religious rules and government policies; in 1635, he founded Providence, a community based on religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

**Anne Hutchinson** A religious leader banished from Massachusetts in 1636 because of her criticism of the colonial government and what were judged to be heretical beliefs.

**magistrates** Civil officers charged with administering the law.

# Investigating America

## Anne Hutchinson, 1637

Winthrop's questioning of Anne Hutchinson at the court in Newton turned into a battle of wits in which the governor, trained in England in the law, often found himself out-argued by the quick-witted goodwife. In the following excerpt, taken from the lengthy interrogation, Winthrop lectures about the proper role of women in New England society.

*Winthrop:* We do not mean to discourse with those of your sex but only this; you so adhere unto [the leaders of the colony] and do endeavor to set forward this faction and so you do dishonour us.

*Hutchinson:* I do acknowledge no such thing. Neither do I think that I ever put any dishonour upon you.

*Winthrop:* Why do you keep such a meeting at your house as you do every week upon a set day?

*Hutchinson:* It is lawful for me to do so, as it is all your practices, and can you find a warrant for yourself and condemn me for the same thing?

*Winthrop:* By what warrant do you continue such a course?

*Hutchinson:* I conceive there lies a clear rule in Titus that the elder women should instruct the younger and then I must have a time wherein I must do it.

*Winthrop:* All this I grant you, I grant you a time for it, but what is this to the purpose that you, Mrs. Hutchinson, must call a company together from their callings to come to be taught by you?

*Hutchinson:* Will it please you to answer me this and to give me a rule for then I will willingly submit to any truth....Do you think it not lawful for me to teach women, and why do you call me to teach the court?

*Winthrop:* We do not call you to teach the court but to lay open yourself....Your course is not to be suffered for.

- Do you think Hutchinson would have attracted less attention if she only taught women, or was the governor's problem deeper than that?
- Winthrop also had problems with men like Roger Williams. What was it about their theology that made Calvinists so difficult to govern? That is, why were separatists likely to disagree with their governments?

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Excerpted from THE TRIAL OF ANNE HUTCHINSON: LIBERTY, LAW, AND INTOLERANCE IN PURITAN NEW ENGLAND: REACTING TO THE PAST by Marc C. Carnes (ed). Copyright © 2004 by Longman Publishers.

In the end, none of Hutchinson's supporters could protect her against the determined opposition of the Puritan leadership. In 1637 she was arrested and brought to trial. Although she was in the last months of a troubled pregnancy, her judges forced her to stand throughout the lengthy examination. Hutchinson seemed to be winning the battle of words despite her physical discomfort, but eventually she blundered. In one of her answers, she seemed to claim that she had direct communication with God. Such a claim went far beyond the acceptable bounds of Puritan belief. Triumphantly, Winthrop and his colleagues declared her a heretic and banished her from Massachusetts.

### Indian Suppression

Although the Puritan colonists hoped to create a godly community, they were often motivated by greed and jealousy. Between 1636 and the 1670s, New Englanders came into conflict with one another over desirable land. They also waged particularly violent warfare against the Indians of the region.

The first to feel pressure were the Pequots of the Connecticut Valley. By 1636, the **Pequot War** had begun, with the Indians under attack from both Massachusetts and



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**Pequot War** Conflict in 1636 between the Pequot Indians inhabiting eastern Connecticut and the colonists of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut: the Indians were destroyed and driven from the area.

Connecticut armies and their Indian allies, the Narragansetts and the Mohicans. Mounting a joint effort, the colonists targeted the Pequot town of Mystic Village. Although the village was defenseless and contained mostly civilians, Captain John Mason gave the orders for the attack. Captain John Underhill of the Massachusetts army recorded the slaughter with obvious satisfaction: “Many [Pequots] were burnt in the fort, both men, women, and children.” When the survivors tried to surrender to the Narragansetts, Puritan soldiers killed them. The brutal war did not end until all the Pequot men had been killed and the women and children sold into slavery. If the Narragansett Indians believed their alliance with Winthrop would protect them, they were mistaken. Within five years the Puritans had assassinated the Narragansett chief, an act of insurance against problems with these Indian allies.

For almost three decades, an uneasy peace existed between New England colonists and Indians. But the struggle over the land continued. When war broke out again, it was two longtime allies—the Plymouth colonists and the Wampanoags—who took up arms against each other. By 1675, the friendship between these two groups had been eroded by Pilgrim demands for new Indian lands. Chief **Metacom**, known to the English as King Philip, made the difficult decision to resist. When Metacom used **guerrilla tactics** effectively, staging raids on white settlements, the colonists retaliated by burning Indian crops and villages and selling captives into slavery. By the end of the year, Metacom had forged an alliance with the Narragansetts and several small regional tribes. Metacom’s devastating raids on white settlements terrified the colonists, but soon the casualties grew on both sides. Atrocities were committed by everyone involved in this struggle, which the English called King Philip’s War. With the help of Iroquois troops sent by the governor of New York, the colonists finally defeated the Wampanoags. Metacom was murdered, and his head was impaled on a stick.

### Change and Reaction in England and New England

Both Pilgrim and Puritan leaders had expected the broad expanse of the Atlantic Ocean to protect their colonies from the political and religious tensions that wracked seventeenth-century England. Like their Chesapeake counterparts, they were wrong. From the beginning, of course, Puritan migration to New England had been prompted by Charles I’s hostility to dissenters. When Puritan armies challenged the Stuart king in 1642, Bay Colony settlers rejoiced. Many chose to return home to fight in this Puritan Revolution. Throughout the decade, the Massachusetts population shrank.

Massachusetts faced a crisis in the post-civil war years. The sense of mission that had accompanied its founding seemed to be declining. Few new saints migrated to the Bay Colony after Cromwell’s victory or during the Restoration era. In fact, most of the newcomers in the 1660s were not Puritans at all but Anglicans or members of other Protestant groups seeking economic opportunities. The decline in religious zeal troubled ministers and government officials alike, for it marked a sharp decline in eligible voters and officeholders. The problem was made worse by the growing demands of prosperous non-Puritan men for an active role in the government. Some towns began to compromise, allowing men of property and good standing in the community to participate in local decision making. But the saints were not willing to set aside the church membership requirement. In 1662 they decided to introduce the **Half-Way Covenant**, an agreement that allowed the children of church members to join the church even if they did not make a convincing declaration of their own salvation. This compromise kept political power in the hands of Puritans—for the moment.

**Metacom** A Wampanoag chief, known to the English as King Philip, who led the Indian resistance to colonial expansion in New England in 1675.

**guerrilla tactics** A method of warfare in which small bands of fighters in occupied territory harass and attack their enemies, often in surprise raids; the Indians used these tactics during King Philip’s War.

**Half-Way Covenant** An agreement (1662) that gave partial membership in Puritan churches to the children of church members even if they had not had a “saving faith” experience.

Pressures from England could not be dealt with so easily, however. Charles II cast a doubtful eye on a colony that sometimes ignored English civil law if it conflicted with biblical demands. In 1683 Charles insisted that the Bay Colony revise its charter to weaken the influence of biblical teachings and eliminate the stringent voting requirements. The Massachusetts government refused. With that, Charles revoked the charter. Massachusetts remained in political limbo until 1685, when James II came to the throne. Then conditions worsened. In an effort to centralize administration of his growing American empire, James combined several of the northern colonies into one large unit under direct royal control. This megacolony, the **Dominion of New England**, included Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Plymouth Plantations, and the newly acquired colonies of New Jersey and New York. James expected the Dominion to increase the **patronage**, or political favors, he could provide to his loyal supporters and hoped to increase revenues by imposing taxes on colonial goods in the vast region.

What King James did not expect was how strongly colonists resented his Dominion and the man he chose to govern it, the arrogant Sir Edmund Andros. When Boston citizens received news of the Glorious Revolution, they imprisoned Andros and shipped him back to England to stand trial as a traitor to the nation's new Protestant government. Massachusetts Puritans hoped to be rewarded for their patriotism, but they were quickly disappointed. Although William and Mary abolished the Dominion, they chose not to restore the Bay Colony charter. In 1691 Massachusetts became a royal colony, its governor appointed by the Crown. **Suffrage**, or voting rights, was granted to all free males who met a **property requirement**. Church membership would never again be a criterion for citizenship in the colony.

Over the course of its sixty-year history, Massachusetts had undergone many significant changes. The Puritan ideal of small, tightly knit farming communities had been replaced by bustling seaport cities, diverse beliefs, and a more secular, or nonreligious, orientation to daily life. This transition increased tensions in every community. Those tensions contributed to one of the most dramatic events in the region's history: the Salem witch trials.

In 1692 a group of young women and girls in Salem Village began to show signs of what seventeenth-century society diagnosed as bewitchment. They fell into violent fits, contorting their bodies and showing great emotional distress. Under questioning, they named several local women, including a West Indian slave named Tituba, as their tormentors. More accusations followed, and by summer, more than a hundred women, men, and children were crowded into local jails, awaiting trial. Accusations, trials, and even executions—nineteen in all—continued until the new royal governor, Sir William Phips, arrived in the colony and forbade any further arrests. Phips dismissed the court that had passed judgment based on “spectral evidence”—that is, testimony by the alleged victims that they had seen the spirits of those tormenting them. In January 1693, Phips assembled a new court that acquitted the remaining prisoners.

What had prompted this terrible episode in colonial history? In part, the witch trials reflected a struggle between Puritan farmers of Salem Village and the town's more worldly merchants, for the accusers were often members of the farming community whereas the accused were often associated with commercial activities. In part, they reflected the fact that danger continued to lurk nearby, despite the busy port towns and the prosperity of the older farming communities. French and Indian attacks on the border settlements were frequent and brutal, and refugees from this violence could be seen in many older towns. In the despair that followed these attacks, colonists looked for someone to blame for their losses.

**Dominion of New England** A megacolony created in 1688 by James II under the control of one royal governor; William and Mary dissolved the Dominion when they came to the throne in 1689.

**patronage** Jobs or favors distributed on a political basis, usually as rewards for loyalty or service.

**suffrage** The right to vote.

**property requirement** The limitation of voting rights to citizens who own certain kinds or amounts of property.

## The Pluralism of the Middle Colonies

- ★ **What cultural and economic tensions came to a head in Leisler's Rebellion?**
- ★ **What made William Penn's vision for Pennsylvania so distinctive?**

Between the Chesapeake and New England lay the vast stretch of forest and farmland called New Netherland, a Dutch colony that was home to settlers from Holland, Sweden, France, and the German states. In the 1660s, Charles II seized the area and drove the Dutch from the Atlantic coast of North America. The English divided the conquered territory into three colonies: New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Although the region changed hands, it did not change its character: the Middle Colonies remained a multicultural, commercially oriented, and competitive society no matter whose flag flew over them.

### From New Netherland to New York

Before 1650, Europe's two major Protestant powers, England and Holland, had maintained a degree of cooperation, and their American colonies remained on friendly terms. But a growing rivalry over the transatlantic trade and conflicting

land claims in the Connecticut Valley soon eroded this neighborliness. Beginning in 1652, these rivals fought three naval wars as both nations tried to control the transatlantic trade in raw materials and manufactured goods. After each, the Dutch lost ground, and their decline made it likely that the New Netherland settlement would be abandoned.

King Charles II of England wanted New Netherland, and James, Duke of York (later King James II), was eager to satisfy his brother's desires. In 1664 Charles agreed to give James control of the region lying between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers—if James could wrest it from the Dutch (see Map 3.1). The promise and the prize amounted to a declaration of war on New Netherland.

When the duke's four armed ships arrived in New Amsterdam harbor and aimed their cannon at the town, Governor Peter Stuyvesant tried to rally the local residents to resist. They declined. Life under the English, they reasoned, would probably be no worse than life under the Dutch. Perhaps it might be better. The humiliated governor surrendered the colony, and in 1664 New Netherland became New York without a shot being fired.

James's colony did not develop as he had hoped, however. Settlement did not expand to the north and east as he wished. He could not enlist the aid of influential New Yorkers in his expansion plans, even though he offered them the incentive of a representative assembly in 1682. By 1685, James—now king of England—had lost interest in the colony, abandoning his schemes for its growth and abolishing the representative assembly as well.

### Leisler's Rebellion

Although James viewed New York as a failure, the colony actually grew rapidly during his rule. The population doubled between 1665 and 1685, reaching fifteen thousand. These new settlers added to the cultural diversity that had always characterized the region. The colony became a religious refuge for French Protestants, English Quakers, and Scottish **Presbyterians**. New York's diverse community, however, did not always live in harmony. English, Dutch, and German merchants competed fiercely for control of New York City's trade and for dominance in the city's cultural life. Only one thing united these competitors: a burning resentment of James's political control

**Presbyterians** Members of a Protestant sect that eventually became the established church of Scotland; in the seventeenth century, the sect was sometimes persecuted by Scotland's rulers.

and the men he chose to enforce his will. Their anger increased when James created the Dominion of New England, merging New York with the Puritan colonies.

In 1689, news of the Glorious Revolution prompted a revolt in New York City similar to the one that shook Boston. **Jacob Leisler**, a German merchant, emerged as its leader. Although Leisler lacked the charisma and commanding presence that had allowed Nathaniel Bacon to rise to power in 1667, he was able to take control of the entire colony. Acting in the name of the new English monarchs, he not only removed Dominion officials but imprisoned several of his local opponents, declaring them enemies of Protestantism. He then called for city elections, expecting an era of home rule to follow his rebellion. But England's new monarchs had no intention of leaving a local merchant in charge of a royal colony. When William and Mary sent a new governor to New York, Leisler refused to surrender the reins of government. This time, the abrasive, headstrong merchant found few supporters, and eventually he was forced to step down. To Leisler's surprise, he was then arrested and charged with treason. Both he and his son-in-law were tried, found guilty, and executed. In death, Leisler became a hero and a martyr. Popular anger was so great that to quiet the discontent, the new governor had to permit formation of a representative assembly. Several of the men elected to this new legislature were ardent Leislerians, and for many years New York politics remained a battleground between home rule advocates and supporters of the royal governor and the king.

### William Penn's Holy Experiment

More than most dissenting sects, Quakers had paid a high price for their strongly held convictions. Members of the Society of Friends had been jailed in England and Scotland and harassed by their neighbors throughout the empire. Quaker leaders had strong motives to create a refuge for members of their beleaguered church. In the 1670s, a group of wealthy Friends purchased New Jersey from its original proprietors and offered religious freedom and generous political rights to its current and future colonists, many of whom were Puritans. The best known of these Quaker proprietors was **William Penn**, who had given up a life of privilege, luxury, and self-indulgence in Restoration society and embraced the morally demanding life of the Friends.

Penn's father, Admiral Sir William Penn, was a political adviser to King Charles II, and his son was equally loyal. Eventually, Charles rewarded the Penns' devotion. In 1681, he granted the younger Penn a charter to a huge area west of the Delaware River. (The southernmost section of Penn's grant, added later by Charles II, developed independent of Penn's control and in 1776 became the state of Delaware.) This gave Penn the opportunity to create for Quakers a refuge that fully embodied their religious principles. Called Pennsylvania, meaning "Penn's Woods," the colony was founded upon the conviction that the divine spirit, or "inner light," resided in every human being. Quakers thus were expected to respect all individuals. By their plain dress and their refusal to remove their hats in the presence of their social "better," Quakers demonstrated their belief that all men and women were equal. In keeping with their egalitarian principles, Quakers recognized no distinctions of wealth or social status in their places of worship. At the strikingly simple Quaker meeting, or worship service, any member who felt moved to speak was welcome to participate, no matter how poor or uneducated and no matter what sex or age. Although they actively sought converts, Quakers were always tolerant of other religions.

Penn's land policy also reflected Quaker principles. Unlike many proprietors, he wanted no politically powerful landlords and no economically dependent tenant farmers. Instead, he actively promoted a society of independent, landowning farm families.

**Jacob Leisler** German merchant who led a revolt in New York in 1689 against royal officials representing the Dominion of New England; he was executed as a traitor.

**William Penn** English Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania in 1681.

This sketch of a Quaker meeting highlights one of the most radical of Quaker practices: allowing women to speak in church. Most Protestant denominations, because of their reading of Saint Paul, enforced the rule of silence on women. But Quakers struck a blow at seventeenth-century gender notions by granting women an active ministerial role and a voice in church policy. “The Quaker Meeting” (detail) by Egbert Van Heemskerk. The Quaker Collection, Haverford College Library.



Penn also insisted that all land be purchased fairly from the Indians, and he pursued a policy of peaceful coexistence between the two cultures. He took an active role in making Pennsylvania a multicultural society, recruiting non-English settlers through pamphlets that stressed the religious and political freedoms and economic opportunities his colony offered. Many immigrants came from England, but Irish, Scottish, Welsh, French, Scandinavian, and German settlers arrived as well. To their English neighbors who did not speak German, newcomers from Germany such as the Mennonites and Amish were known as the “Pennsylvania Dutch,” from *Deutsch*, meaning “German.” By the time of Penn’s death in 1717, Philadelphia was already emerging as a great shipping and commercial center, rivaling the older seaports of Boston and New York City. But as in New England, this success came at some cost to the colony’s original vision and principles.

## The Colonies of the Lower South

- ★ **What type of society did the founders of Carolina hope to create? How did the colony differ from their expectations?**
- ★ **Why did philanthropists create Georgia? Why did the king support this project?**

Penn was not the only Englishman to benefit from the generosity of King Charles II. In 1663 the king surprised eight of his favorite supporters by granting them several million acres lying south of Virginia and stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This gesture by Charles was both grand and calculated. France, Spain, Holland, and the Indian tribes that inhabited this area all laid claim to it, and Charles thought it would be wise to secure England’s control of the region. The eight new colonial proprietors named their colony Carolina to honor the king’s late father, who had lost his head to the Puritan Commonwealth (and whose name in Latin was Carolus; see Map 3.1).

### The Carolina Colony

**yeoman** Independent landowner entitled to suffrage.

The proprietors’ plan for Carolina was similar to Lord Baltimore’s medieval dream. The philosopher John Locke helped draw up the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina, an elaborate blueprint for a society of great landowners, **yeomen** (small, independent farmers), and serfs (agricultural laborers) bound to work for their

landlords. Locke later became famous for his essays on freedom and human rights (see Chapter 4)—a far cry from the social hierarchy proposed in the Carolina constitution. Like the Calverts, however, the Carolina proprietors discovered that few English people were willing to travel 3,000 miles across the ocean to become serfs. Bowing to reality, the proprietors offered the incentive of the head right system used in Virginia and Maryland decades earlier.

The early settlers in Carolina, many of them relocating from the Caribbean island of Barbados, made their way to the southeastern portion of the colony, drawn there by the fine natural harbor of the port city, Charles Town (later Charleston), and its fertile surroundings. Despite the dangers of the Spanish to the south in Florida and the Yamasee to the southwest, Charles Town grew rapidly, becoming the most important city in the southern colonies. Some settlers established trade with the Indians of the region, exchanging English goods for deerskins and for captive victims of tribal warfare, who were shipped as slaves to the Caribbean. Other colonists tapped the region's pine forests to produce naval stores—the timber, tar, and turpentine that were used in building and maintaining wooden ships. But in the 1680s, Carolina cattlemen turned to a new and very profitable enterprise in rice cultivation. These planters quickly became the richest English colonists on the mainland.

The northern region of Carolina did not fare as well. Bordered by the Great Dismal Swamp to the north, this isolated area attracted few colonists. The land around Albemarle Sound was fertile enough, but the remaining coastline was cut off from the Atlantic by a chain of barrier islands that blocked access to oceangoing vessels. Despite these constraints, some poor farm families drifted in from Virginia, searching for unclaimed land and a fresh start. They had modest success in growing tobacco and producing naval stores. By 1729 they were numerous enough to take control from the original proprietors, as their elite neighbors around Charleston had done in 1719. Then these North Carolinians went one step further and officially separated from the rice-rich southern section of the colony.

### Georgia, the Last Colony

More than one hundred years after the first Jamestown colonists struggled against starvation and disease in Virginia, the last of the original thirteen colonies was established in the

Lower South. In 1732, **James Oglethorpe**, a wealthy English social reformer, and several of his friends requested a charter for a colony on the Florida border. Oglethorpe did not seek to make a profit from this colony; instead he hoped to provide a new, moral life for English men and women imprisoned for minor debts. King George II was also anxious to create a protective buffer between the valuable rice-producing colony of South Carolina and the Spanish in Florida. The king inserted a clause in the Georgia charter requiring military service from every male settler. Thus he guaranteed that the poor men of Georgia would protect the rich men of South Carolina (see Map 3.1).

Oglethorpe and his associates added their own special restrictions on the lives of the Georgia colonists. Because they believed that poverty was the result of a weak character or, worse, of an addiction to vice, they did not think debtors could govern themselves. They forbade a representative assembly and denied the settlers a voice in selecting political leaders and military officers. In an effort to reform the character of their colonists, the trustees set other rules, including a ban on all alcoholic beverages. To ensure that these settlers worked hard, they kept individual land grants small, and they banned slavery.

Oglethorpe interviewed many imprisoned debtors, searching for members of the “deserving poor” who would benefit from settling in Georgia. But few of these debtors met

**James Oglethorpe** English philanthropist who established the colony of Georgia in 1732 as a refuge for debtors.

his standards. In the end, most of the colony's settlers turned out to be middle-class English immigrants and South Carolinians looking for new land. These colonists did not welcome the trustees' paternalistic attitudes, and they soon challenged all the restrictive rules and regulations in the charter, including the ban on slave labor. By the 1740s, illegal slave auctions were a common sight in Georgia's largest town, Savannah. In 1752, Oglethorpe and his fellow trustees had lost enthusiasm for their reform project and, with relief, returned Georgia to the king.

## Summary

In 1607, the English created their first permanent colony at Jamestown. By 1732, thirteen English colonies hugged the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Some, like Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, were founded as religious refuges; others were founded for profit. Four distinct regions soon emerged, based primarily on how the settlers made their livings: the Chesapeake, where tobacco was the staple crop; New England, with its small farms, shipping, and lumbering industries; the Middle Colonies, which grew and exported wheat through the major port cities of New York and Philadelphia; and the Lower South, where rice plantations, worked by African slaves, dominated.

Virginia and Maryland made up the Chesapeake region. Here tobacco shaped every aspect of life. Thousands of poor young Englishmen were brought over as indentured servants to work in the tobacco fields. Few women were recruited, and the combination of an unbalanced sex ratio and frequent deaths caused by an unhealthy climate, grueling labor, and poor diet produced what historians call a “demographic disaster” in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake.

The colonies of the Lower South—the Carolinas and Georgia—were established many decades after the Chesapeake. Carolina's proprietors tried to create a feudal society, and Georgia's founders wanted to build a haven for debtors. In the end, however, neither goal was achieved. South Carolina focused on rice production, using African slave labor, and these planters became the richest group in the colonies.

Plymouth Plantations, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and later New Hampshire made up the New England colonies. Here, the earliest settlers were dissenters who sought religious freedom. In 1620, separatists known as the Pilgrims founded the first New England

colony, Plymouth Plantations. Their leaders drafted a radical document known as the Mayflower Compact, which assured broad political rights to all the men on board their ship. In 1630, Massachusetts Bay was founded by the Puritans who intended it to be a model Protestant community. When Puritans like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson challenged the colony's leadership and its religious practices, they were exiled. Williams went on to found Rhode Island on the principle of separation of church and state. In 1691, Massachusetts was taken over by the King, and the Puritans' religious experiment ended. The anxiety produced by political and economic change, coupled with dangers on the frontier, contributed to the Salem witch hunts.

The Middle Colonies region was originally settled by the Dutch and the Swedes, but the English seized the area in 1664. New Sweden and New Netherland became New Jersey and New York. In 1681, William Penn created the colony of Pennsylvania, west of New Jersey, as a home for Quakers. Unlike the Puritans, however, he welcomed people of all faiths into his “holy experiment.” The Middle Colonies were noted for their diverse populations and policies of religious tolerance.

Religious, economic, and political conflicts were common back in England, and it was often no more peaceful in the colonies. In Maryland, Protestants and Catholics warred with each other and in Virginia, poor backcountry farmers, led by Nathaniel Bacon, rose up against the wealthier coastal planters in 1676. The desire for land led colonists in Virginia and New England into war against Indians. Finally, English policies prompted rebellions, as colonists in Boston and New York rose up to overthrow the hated Dominion of New England in 1689. Amid this turmoil, one thing was certain: great changes would take place in the eighteenth century.

## Key Terms

- |                            |                               |                                |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chesapeake, p. 51          | William Bradford, p. 59       | Metacomet, p. 66               |
| Church of England, p. 53   | Mayflower Compact, p. 59      | guerrilla tactics, p. 66       |
| Parliament, p. 53          | Squanto, p. 59                | Half-Way Covenant, p. 66       |
| Restoration, p. 53         | John Winthrop, p. 61          | Dominion of New England, p. 67 |
| Glorious Revolution, p. 53 | Great Migration, p. 61        | patronage, p. 67               |
| entrepreneurs, p. 53       | hierarchy, p. 63              | Suffrage, p. 67                |
| joint-stock company, p. 53 | <i>femme couverte</i> , p. 63 | property requirement, p. 67    |
| Jamestown, p. 54           | sainthood, p. 63              | Presbyterians, p. 68           |
| head right system, p. 55   | Quakers, p. 64                | Jacob Leisler, p. 69           |
| House of Burgesses, p. 55  | heretics, p. 64               | William Penn, p. 69            |
| staple crop, p. 56         | Roger Williams, p. 64         | yeomen, p. 70                  |
| indentured servants, p. 57 | Anne Hutchinson, p. 64        | James Oglethorpe, p. 71        |
| separatists, p. 59         | magistrates, p. 64            |                                |
| Pilgrims, p. 59            | Pequot War, p. 65             |                                |



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# CHAPTER

## 4

# The English Colonies in the Eighteenth Century

## 1689–1763

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### ***The English Transatlantic Communities of Trade***

Regions of Commerce  
The Cords of Commercial Empire  
**IT MATTERS TODAY:** Women's Opportunities, Then and Now

#### ***Community and Work in Colonial Society***

The Emergence of the "Yankee" Planter Society and Slavery Slave Experience and Slave Culture

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**

Eliza Lucas, 1740s  
The Urban Culture of the Middle Colonies  
Life in the Backcountry

#### ***Conflicts Among the Colonists***

Slave Revolts, North and South  
Conflicts Between the Rich and the Poor

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** The Stono Rebellion, 1739

#### ***Reason and Religion in Colonial Society***

The Impact of the Enlightenment  
Religion and Religious Institutions  
The Great Awakening  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**  
George Whitefield, 1740

#### ***Government and Politics in the Mainland Colonies***

Imperial Institutions and Policies  
Local Colonial Government  
Conflicting Views of the Assemblies

#### ***North America and the Struggle for Empire***

An Age of Imperial Warfare  
The Great War for Empire  
The Outcomes of the Great War for Empire

#### ***Summary***

#### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Eliza Lucas Pinckney**

Eliza Lucas of South Carolina was only 16 when her father was called away to war and left her in charge of his three plantations. The decision would have surprised most eighteenth-century colonists, but George Lucas believed Eliza was no ordinary young woman. Eliza quickly proved her father right for, under her management, the family plantations prospered. She introduced a new crop, **indigo**, from which a valuable blue dye was made. While other wealthy young women thought about marriage, Eliza busied herself with planting, paying bills, directing overseers, and selling crops. But she also made time for traditional female tasks like attending teas, visiting the sick, and learning to play the piano. She set herself a grueling daily schedule, beginning each day at 5:00 A.M.

Eliza's father had encouraged many nontraditional skills in his daughter. He opened his legal library to her and educated her fully on her legal rights as a single woman, or **femme sole**. She put her legal expertise to good use, helping her neighbors write their wills and sue for their debts.

Eliza stubbornly protected her independence. When she finally married, it was to an old and respected friend, Charles Pinckney, a widower twice her age who was a leading lawyer and political figure in the colony. As a wife, Eliza turned her full attention to domestic concerns and to the education of her five children. She rejected the traditional notion that children were burdened by original sin and raised her family according to John Locke's theories of the power of nurture and encouragement. Locke's advice served her well: Eliza and Charles's two surviving sons grew up to be political leaders during the revolutionary struggle and her only daughter followed in Eliza's footsteps, eventually running her own plantation.

#### **ELIZA LUCAS PINCKNEY'S GOWN**

As the daughter of one prosperous South Carolina planter and the wife of another, Eliza Lucas Pinckney could afford luxuries most colonists could not hope to enjoy. But the gown shown in this photograph was made of silk produced on her plantation and sent to England to be woven and dyed. Pinckney, who became the manager of her father's three plantations when she was a teenager, took great pride in experimenting with new crops, including silk from silkworms and the blue dye indigo.

National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Behring Center.



# Chronology

<b>1690–1691</b>	Understanding and Two Treatises of Government	<b>1734</b>	Great Awakening spreads to New England
<b>1701</b>	Yale College founded	<b>1739</b>	Stono Rebellion in South Carolina
<b>1702</b>	Queen Anne's War begins	<b>1740</b>	King George's War begins George Whitefield begins his preaching tour
<b>1704</b>	Pro-French Indians attack Deerfield, Massachusetts	<b>1756</b>	Great War for Empire begins
<b>1711</b>	Tuscarora War begins in North Carolina	<b>1759</b>	British capture Quebec
<b>1712</b>	New York City slave revolt	<b>1760</b>	George III becomes British king
<b>1715</b>	Colonists defeat Creek and Yamasee Indians of Georgia	<b>1763</b>	Treaty of Paris

Even the most casual observer of colonial society could not fail to note major regional changes and developments during the eighteenth century. A new system of slave labor was defining the Southern colonies; cities were growing dramatically in the Middle Colonies; in New England, a Puritan world was transforming into a world of enterprising Yankees.

These differences among the regions were offset by many shared experiences. The colonists were all part of a common imperial structure. They were also part of a sprawling transatlantic community, in which goods, people, and ideas steadily flowed between England, Europe, the Americas, and Africa. Although some 3,000 miles of ocean separated New Yorkers from Londoners, colonists journeyed between the two worlds, bringing news of developments in politics, changes in fashion, and popular books. Events in Europe and in the Caribbean had an impact on everything in colonial life from the religious background of new immigrants to debates over slavery in Virginia to the safety of life on the Maine frontier.

Although Americans eagerly awaited news from an England they still called "home," few members of the English elite followed American developments closely. Most continued to think of the colonies as a dumping ground for misfits who would struggle to survive on a violent frontier. Members of the English Parliament viewed the colonists as a collective source of endless problems. They expected insubordinate colonial legislatures, defiant merchants who violated trade regulations, and a dangerously unstable political atmosphere in a society that gave common men an **unprecedented** voice in government. Yet it was the colonists who often suffered from decisions made by Parliament and King. England's fierce rivalries with European nations produced a long series of imperial wars that disrupted colonial life and cast a long shadow over communities from the Maine border to Georgia. In the end, England would triumph over every rival for a North American empire. The outcome of this victory would prove surprising to everyone.

**indigo** Shrublike plant with clusters of red or purple flowers, grown on plantations in the South; it was a primary source of blue dye in the eighteenth century.

**femme sole** From the French for "woman alone"; a legal term for an unmarried, widowed, or divorced woman who has the legal right to own or sell property, sue or be sued, or earn wages.

**unprecedented** Unheard of or novel.

## The English Transatlantic Communities of Trade

- ★ **What were the main regional differences in colonial commerce?**
- ★ **In which region, and for what reasons, did new immigrants seem to have the best economic choices?**

Although the English spoke of "the colonial trade," British America did not have a single, unified economy. Instead, four distinctive regional economies had developed on the

**subsistence society** A society that produces the food and supplies necessary for its survival but does not produce a surplus that can be marketed.

**absentee planter** An estate owner who collects profits from farming or rent but does not live on the land or help cultivate it.

**tidewater** Low coastal land drained by tidal streams in Maryland and Virginia.

**carrying trade** The business of transporting goods across the Atlantic or to and from the Caribbean.

mainland, concentrated along the Atlantic coastline and bordered on the west by the primarily **subsistence society** that was commonly found on the edge of white settlements. To the south, the English sugar islands of the Caribbean made up a fifth unique regional economy. Each of these economies was shaped by environmental conditions, natural resources, commercial policy, and the available labor force.

### Regions of Commerce

The sugar-producing islands of the West Indies were the brightest jewels in the English imperial crown. By the eighteenth century, the English flag flew over St. Kitts, Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, and Jamaica. On each island, English plantation owners built fabulous fortunes on the sugar that African slaves produced. While the **absentee planters** lived in luxury in England, black slaves lived—and died in staggering numbers—on the islands, working the cane fields and tending the fires that burned day and night under the sugar vats of the “great Boiling houses.”

Tobacco continued to dominate the economy of the Chesapeake, although by the eighteenth century, “brown gold” was no longer the only crop Virginians and Marylanders were willing to plant. In fact, at the turn of the century, when the price of tobacco was driven down by high taxes and competition from Mediterranean sources, many **tidewater** planters chose to diversify. They began producing wheat and other grains for export. The second major shift came in the labor force used in tobacco cultivation. By the eighteenth century, African slaves had replaced indentured servants in the fields. Planters who could afford to purchase a number of slaves enjoyed a competitive advantage over their neighbors because they had enough workers to plant and harvest bigger crops. This large-scale production kept tobacco the number one export of the mainland colonies.

By contrast, the New England economy depended far less on Britain as a market. The rocky soil of the region made large-scale farming unfeasible for New Englanders. Instead, they developed both a lumbering and a fishing industry, and shipped the timber and dried fish to the West Indies. But it was shipbuilding and the ambitious **carrying trade** connected to it that dominated New England’s economy. Colonists made great profits from an extensive shipping network that carried colonial exports across the Atlantic and distributed foreign goods and English manufactured products to the colonies. Some merchant-shippers—the slave traders of Newport, Rhode Island, for example—specialized in a certain commodity, but most were willing to carry any cargo that promised a profit. By the eighteenth century, New England shipping made these colonists rivals of English merchants rather than useful sources of profit for the Mother Country.

### The Cords of Commercial Empire

England’s mainland colonists traded, both directly and indirectly, with many European nations and their colonies. Salt, wine, and spices reached colonial tables from southern Europe, and sugar, rum, molasses, and cotton came to their households from the West Indies. But the deepest and broadest channels in the transatlantic trade were those that connected the Mother Country and the colonies. The British purchased over half of all the crops, furs, and mined resources that colonists produced for market and supplied 90 percent of all colonial imports. Strong cords of exchange bound America to England, even if many colonists were second-generation Americans and others traced their roots to different nations or different continents. The English mainland colonies were also bound to one another. In the shops and on the wharfs,



# It Matters Today

## WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES, THEN AND NOW

In her character and her life choices, Eliza Lucas Pinckney seems remarkably modern. Yet she lived in an era when women were assumed to be best suited for the domestic duties known as "housewifery." Of course, Pinckney had advantages many other eighteenth-century women did not enjoy: wealth, social standing, and a father who had confidence in her abilities. Without these advantages, Pinckney might never have been able to venture outside the domestic realm. Today, Pinckney would find herself in the company of many women who are able to succeed in careers in business, medicine, and in an area completely closed out to Pinckney—politics. The contrast between a

life that was extraordinary in the eighteenth century but ordinary in the twenty-first century prompts us to examine what changes have occurred in women's lives between the colonial era and today.

- Choose a profession such as law, medicine, or the military. Research the entrance of women into that profession. What arguments have been offered for and against allowing women into this profession? What factors do you feel have been most significant in opening up opportunities for women in this field? What obstacles still remain?

Pennsylvania flour, Massachusetts mackerel, Carolina rice, and scores of domestic products changed hands in a lively and cheerful commerce. Domestic trade was greater in volume, although lower in value, than all foreign trade in this eighteenth-century world.

## Community and Work in Colonial Society

- ★ **How did Yankee society differ from Puritan society in early eighteenth-century New England?**
- ★ **Why did colonists in the Chesapeake and Lower South shift from indentured servants to slaves as their primary labor force? What problems faced Africans in slavery?**

Despite the belief of many observers that there was an "American character," visitors could not fail to note striking physical and social differences as they traveled from New England to the Lower South. Moving from the carefully laid-out towns of New England, through the crowded seaport cities of the Middle Colonies, and into the isolated rural worlds of the plantation South, they could see that the Yankee culture of Connecticut was strikingly different from the elegant lifestyle of Charles Town planter elite.

### The Emergence of the "Yankee"

In the early eighteenth century, New England's seaport towns and cities grew steadily in size and economic importance. With the rise of a profitable international commerce, the Puritan culture of the village gave way to a more secular "Yankee" culture. In this milieu, a wealthy man could rise to political prominence without any need to demonstrate his piety. Economic competition and the pursuit of profit eclipsed older notions that the well-being of the community was more important than the gains of the individual. Still, some sense of obligation to the community remained in New Englanders' willingness to create and maintain public institutions such as schools and colleges. In 1701, Yale College opened its doors in New Haven, Connecticut, giving the

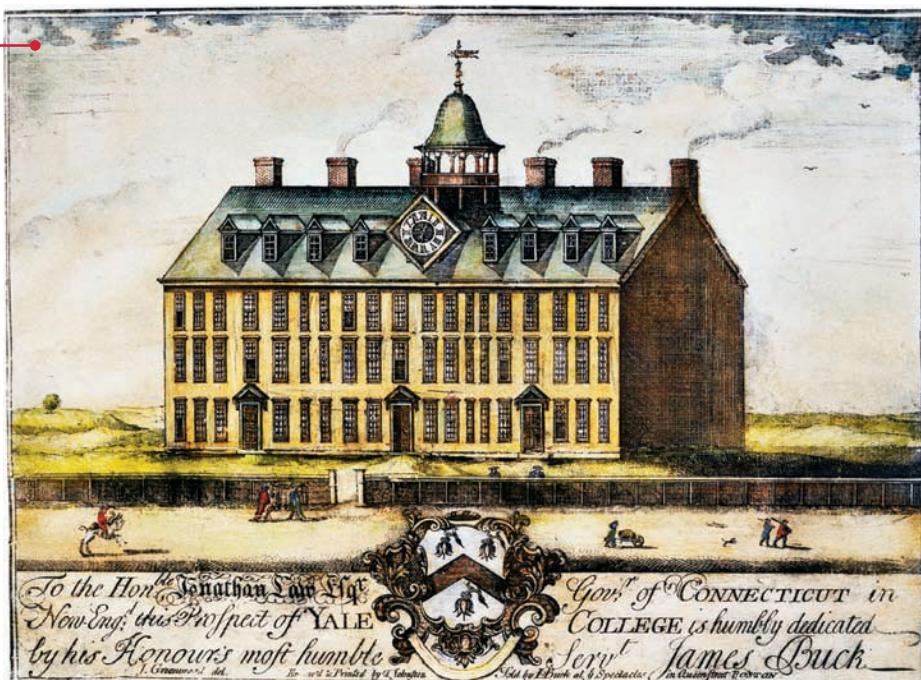
sons of elite New Englanders an alternative to Massachusetts's Harvard College. New Englanders supported newspapers and printing presses that kept their communities informed about local and international events.

Even in more traditional New England villages, changes were evident. By the eighteenth century, many fathers no longer had enough farmland to provide adequately for all their sons. Many younger sons left their families and friends behind and sought their fortunes elsewhere. Some chose to go west, pushing the frontier of settlement as they searched for fertile land. Others went north, to less-developed areas such as Maine. In the process, they created new towns and villages, causing the number of backcountry New England towns to grow steadily. Still other young men abandoned farming entirely and relocated to the commercial cities of the region. Whatever their expectations, urban life often disappointed them, for inequality of wealth and opportunity went hand in hand with the overall prosperity. In Boston, a growing number of poor widows and landless young men scrambled for employment and often wound up dependent on public charity. As news spread about the scarcity of farmland in the countryside and the poverty and competition for work in the cities, European immigrants tended to bypass New England and settle in the Middle Colonies or along the southern frontier.

### Planter Society and Slavery

Southern society was also changing dramatically. By the end of the seventeenth century, the steady supply of cheap labor from England had begun to disappear. The English economy was improving, and young men who might once have signed on as indentured servants in Virginia now chose to remain at home. Those who did immigrate preferred to indenture themselves to farmers and merchants of the Middle Colonies, where work conditions were bearable and economic opportunities were brighter. Although this supply of indentured servants was declining, however, a different labor supply was beginning to increase: enslaved Africans.

Yale College was founded in 1701, making it the third-oldest college in the United States. Its benefactor, Elihu Yale, was born in Boston but spent most of his life in England. By 1749, when this illustration appeared, there were five colleges in the colonies: Harvard, Yale, King's College, the College of New Jersey, and the College of William and Mary. Only the wealthiest young men were likely to attend these schools.  
The Granger Collection, New York.



Although a small number of Africans had been brought to Virginia as early as 1619, the legal differences between black workers and white workers remained vague until the 1660s. By that time, the slowly increasing numbers of African Americans elicited the different, and harsher, treatment that defined slavery in the Caribbean and South America. By midcentury, it became the custom in the Chesapeake to hold black servants for life terms, although their children were still considered free. By the 1660s, colonists turned these customs of **discrimination** into law. In 1662 Virginia took a major step toward making slavery an inherited condition by declaring that “all children born in this country shall be held bond or free according to the condition of the mother.”

Slaves did not become the dominant labor force in southern agriculture until the end of the century, although southern planters were probably well aware of the advantages of slave labor over indentured servitude. A slave, bound for life, would never compete with his former master the way freed white servants did, and most white colonists did not believe that the English customs regulating a master’s treatment of servants had to be applied to Africans. By the 1680s, moreover, the drawbacks to African slavery began to vanish. Mortality rates fell in the Chesapeake, and the English broke the Dutch monopoly on the slave trade. Fierce competition among English slavers drove prices down and at the same time ensured a steady supply of slaves. Under these conditions, the demand for slaves grew in the Chesapeake. Although only 5 percent of the roughly 9.5 million Africans brought to the Americas came to the English mainland colonies, their numbers in Virginia and Maryland rose dramatically in the eighteenth century. By 1700, 13 percent of the Chesapeake population was African or of African descent. At the end of the colonial period, blacks made up 40 percent of Virginia’s population.

If tobacco provided a comfortable life for an eighteenth-century planter, rice provided a luxurious one. The Lower South, too, was a plantation society, headed by the wealthiest mainland coloniststhe rice growers of the coastal regions of Carolina and Georgia. Members of this planter elite concentrated their social life in elegant Charles Town, where they moved each summer to avoid the humidity and unhealthy environment of their lowland plantations. With its beautiful townhouses and parks, Charles Town was the single truly cosmopolitan city of the South and perhaps the most sophisticated of all mainland cities in North America. Yet, by 1708, one-half of the colonial population in Carolina was black, and by 1720, Africans and African Americans outnumbered their white masters. Farther south, in Georgia, the colonists openly defied the trustees’ ban on slavery until that ban was finally lifted.

### Slave Experience and Slave Culture

Most slaves brought to the mainland colonies did not come directly from Africa. Instead, these men and women were reexported to the Chesapeake or the Lower South after a short period of **seasoning** in the tropical climate of the West Indies. But all imported slaves, whether seasoned or new to the Americas, began their bondage when African slavers, often armed with European weapons, captured men, women, and children and delivered them in chains to European ships anchored along the coast of West Africa (see Map 4.1). Although many of those enslaved were considered war captives, others were simply kidnap victims. Even before these captives reached the coast and the European slave ships waiting there, they were introduced to the horrors of slavery. Their captors treated them “severely and barbarously,” beating them and inflicting wounds on their bodies. The many who died on the long march from the interior to the coast were left unburied, their bodies devoured by “beasts of prey.” As the surviving captives were branded and then put into canoes to be rowed to the waiting ships, some

**discrimination** Treatment based on class, gender, or racial category rather than on merit; prejudice.

**seasoning** A period during which slaves from Africa were held in the West Indies so they could adjust to the climate and disease environment of the American tropics.

# Investigating America

## Eliza Lucas at Wappoo, 1740s

The eighteenth-century plantation world of South Carolina was a patriarchal society dedicated to the production of a single staple crop, rice. When Eliza Lucas began experimenting with indigo, figs, and hemp at Wappoo, her family plantation, it was the beginning of a new era of prosperity and diversification in the South Carolina plantation economy. As one of the few women to manage a large plantation at the time, Lucas was unique in her desire to experiment with new crops and stretch old gender roles. In a letter written before her 1744 marriage to Charles Pinckney, young Eliza Lucas provides insight into the experiences of a woman succeeding in a male-dominated society. In this letter to a niece, Lucas describes the demanding schedule she maintained in order to balance her roles as a society woman and a plantation master.

.....

**D**r. Miss B.

Why, my dear Miss B, will you so often repeat your desire to know how I triffler away my time in our retirement in my fathers absence. Could it afford you advantage or pleasure I should not have hesitated, but as you can expect neither from it I would have been excused; however, to show you my readiness in obeying your commands, here it is.

In general then I rise at five o'Clock in the morning, read till Seven, then take a walk in the garden or field, see that the Servants are at their respective business, then to breakfast. The first hour after breakfast is spent at my musick, the next is constantly employed in recolecting something I have learned[ lest] for want of practise it should be quite lost, such as French and short hand. After that I devote the rest of the

time till I dress for dinner to our little Polly and two black girls who I teach to read, and if I have my papa's approbation (my Mamas I have got) I intend [them] for school mistres's for the rest of the negro children—another scheme you see. But to proceed, the first hour after dinner as the first after breakfast at musick, the rest of the afternoon in Needle work till candle light, and from that time to bed time read or write. 'Tis the fashion here to carry our work abroad so that having company, without they are great strangers, is no interruption to that affair; but I have particular matters for particular days, which is an interruption of mine. Monday my musick Master is here. Tuesdays my friend Mrs. Chardon (about 3 mile distant) and I are constantly engaged to each other, she at our house one Tuesday—I at hers the next and this is one of the happiest days I spend at Woppoe. Thursday the whole day except what necessary affairs of the family take up is spent in writing, either on the business of the plantations, or letters to my friends. Every other Fryday, if no company, we go a vizeting so that I go abroad once a week and no oftener.

.....

- Eliza Lucas reveals some of the ways in which she juggles her feminine and masculine roles. Do you think the men of the period spent the same amount of time devoted to learning?
- Eliza also hoped that the two African American slave girls she was educating would educate other slaves on the plantation. What arguments could be raised against this program to educate slaves?
- What benefits might come from the education of slaves?

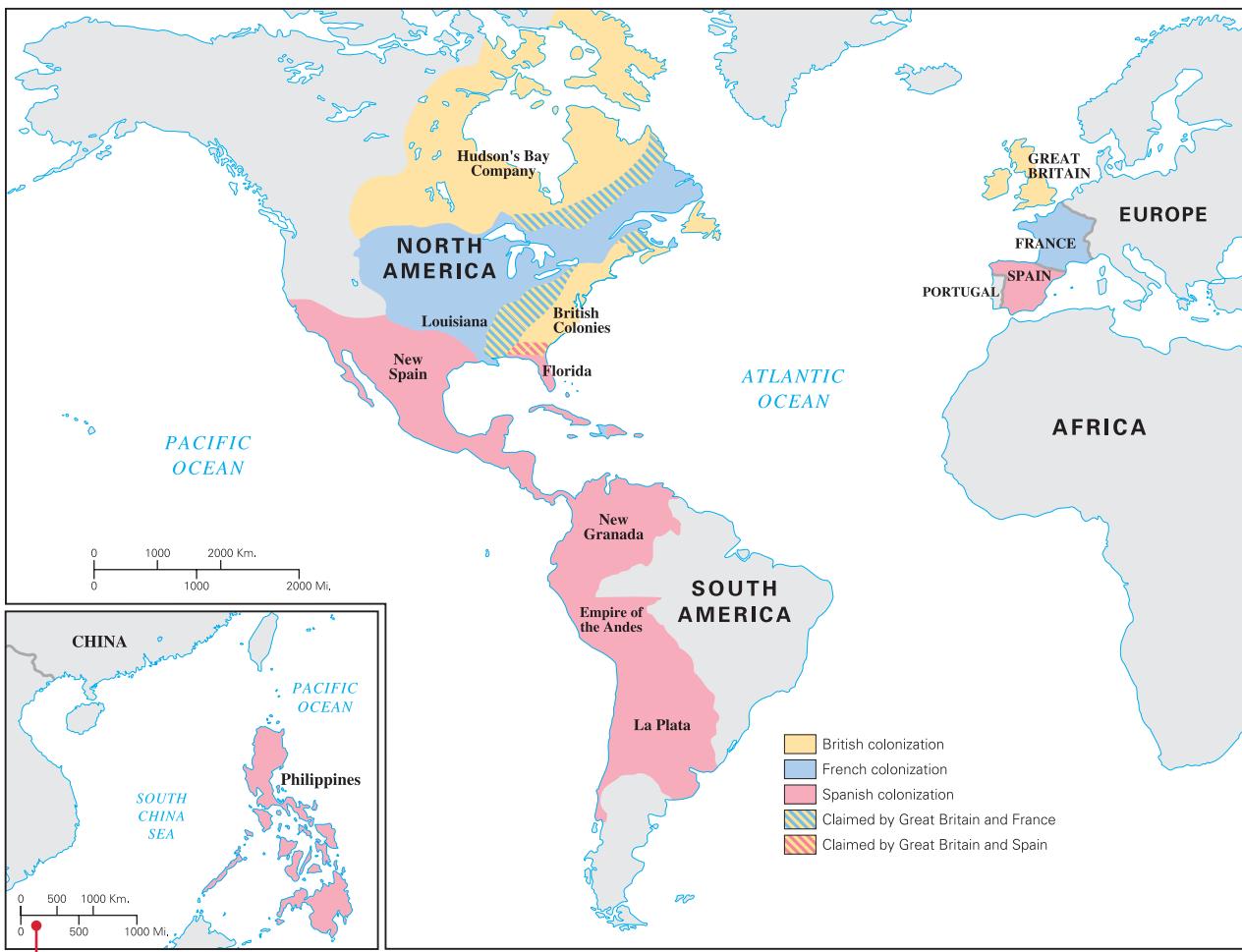


See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**middle passage** The transatlantic voyage of indentured servants or African slaves to the Americas.

committed suicide, leaping overboard into the ocean. The slaves, European traders commented, dreaded life in America more than their captors dreaded hell.

The transatlantic voyage, or **middle passage**, was a nightmare of death, disease, suicide, and sometimes mutiny. The casualties included the white officers and crews of the slave ships, who died of diseases in such great numbers that the waters near Benin in West Africa were known as the "white man's grave." But the loss of black lives was far greater. Slave ships were breeding grounds for scurvy, yellow fever, malaria, dysentery, smallpox, measles, and typhus—each bringing painful death. When smallpox struck his slave ship, one European recorded that "we hauled up eight or ten slaves dead of a morn-ing. The flesh and skin peeled off their wrists when taken hold of." Perhaps 18 percent of all the Africans who began the middle passage died on the ocean.



**MAP 4.1** The European Empires in Eighteenth-Century America

This map shows the colonization of the Americas and the Philippines by three rival powers. It is clear from the map why British colonists felt vulnerable to attack by England's archenemies—France and Spain—until English victory in the Great War for Empire in 1763.

Until the 1720s, most Chesapeake slaves worked alone on a tobacco farm with the owner and his family or in small groups of two or three, in a system known as “gang labor.” This isolation made both marriage and the emergence of a slave community almost impossible. Even on larger plantations, community formation was discouraged by the use of “gangs” made up entirely of women and children or of men only. The steady influx of newly imported slaves, or “outlanders,” during the first decades of the eighteenth century also made it difficult for African Americans to work together to create a culture in response to their disorienting circumstances. The new arrivals had to be taught to speak English and to adapt to the demands of slavery. Slowly, however, these involuntary immigrants from different African societies, speaking different languages, practicing different religions, and surviving under the oppressive conditions of slavery, did create a sense of community, weaving together African and European traditions. The result was an African American culture that gave meaning to, and a sense of identity within, the slave’s oppressive world.



Both Africans and Europeans played critical roles in the African slave trade. In this illustration, African slave drivers march their captives, wearing chains and neckclamps, from their village. Their likely destination: European ships waiting along the west coast of Africa. Journey of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile, New York, 1869.

In the Lower South, where Pinckney ran her estate, slaves were concentrated on large plantations where they had limited or no contact with white society. This isolation from the dominant society allowed them an earlier opportunity to develop a creole, or native, culture. In contrast to gang labor, here a “task labor” system prevailed, in which slaves were assigned certain chores to be completed within a certain time. This alternative gave rice plantation slaves some control over their pace of work and some opportunities to manage their free time. Local languages evolved that mixed a basic English vocabulary with words from a variety of African tongues. One of these languages, Gullah, spoken on the Sea Islands off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, remained the local dialect until the end of the nineteenth century.

### The Urban Culture of the Middle Colonies

The family farms of Pennsylvania, with their profitable wheat crops, earned the colony its reputation as the “best poor man’s country.” Tenant farmers, hired laborers, and even African slaves were not unknown in eastern Pennsylvania, but the colony boasted more middling-class farm families than did neighboring New York or New Jersey. In New York, great estates along the Hudson River controlled much of the colony’s good land, and in New Jersey, wealthy owners dominated the choicest acreage, a situation that often resulted in tensions between the landlords and their tenants.

What made the Middle Colonies distinctive was not the expansive Hudson River estates or the comfortable farmhouses in seas of wheat. The region's distinguishing feature was the dynamic urban life of its two major cities, New York and Philadelphia. Although only 3 percent of the colonial population lived in the eighteenth-century cities, they were a magnet for young men and women, free African Americans, and some of the immigrant population pouring into the colonies from Europe. By 1770, Philadelphia's 40,000 residents made it the second-largest city in the British Empire. In the same year, 25,000 people crowded onto the tip of New York's Manhattan Island.

Although colonial cities were usually thought to be cleaner than European cities, with better sewerage and drainage systems, garbage and excrement left to rot on the streets provided a feast for flies and scavenging animals, including free-roaming pigs. And city residents faced more serious problems than runaway carts and snarling dogs. Sailors on the ships docked at Philadelphia or New York often carried venereal diseases. Fires also raced through these cities of wooden houses, wharfs, and shops. And crime—especially robbery and assault—was no stranger in the urban environment, where taverns, brothels, and gambling houses were common.

These eighteenth-century cities offered a wide range of occupations and experiences that attracted many a farmer's daughter or son but sometimes overwhelmed a new arrival from the countryside. Young men who could endure the noise and confusion sought work as **apprentices** in scores of artisan trades ranging from the luxury crafts of silver- and goldsmithing or cabinet making to the profitable trades of shipbuilding, blacksmithing, or butchering, to the more modest occupations of ropemaking, baking, barbering, or shoemaking. The poorest might find work on the docks or as servants, or they might go to sea. Young women had fewer choices because few trades were open to them. Some might become dressmakers or hatmakers, but domestic service and prostitution were more likely choices. In the Middle Colony cities, as in Boston, widowed farm wives came seeking jobs as nurses, laundresses, teachers, or seamstresses. A widow or an unmarried woman who had a little money could open a shop or set up a tavern or a boarding house.

New York City had the highest concentration of African Americans in the northern colonies. The city attracted many free African American men and women. Only perhaps 5 percent of all mainland colony African Americans were free, and those **manumitted** by their plantation masters frequently chose to remain in the South, although they faced legal and social harassment, including special taxes and severe punishments. Others, though, made their way to the cities of New England and the Middle Colonies, making a living as laborers, servants, or sailors. In addition, although slave labor was not common in New England or on the family farms of the Middle Colonies, slaves were used on New York's docks and wharfs as manual laborers.

### Life in the Backcountry

Thomas Malthus, a well-known English economist and diligent student of **demographics**, believed the eighteenth-century population explosion in the English mainland colonies was "without parallel in history." The colonial white

population climbed from 225,000 in 1688 to over 2 million in 1775, and the number of African Americans reached 500,000 in the same year. Natural increase accounted for much of this growth, and over half of the colonists were under age 16 in 1775. But hundreds of thousands of white immigrants arrived during the eighteenth century, risking hunger, thirst, discomfort, fear, and death on the transatlantic voyage to start life over in America. The majority of these immigrants ended up in the backcountry of the colonies.

**apprentice** A person bound by legal agreement to work for an employer for a specific length of time in exchange for instruction in a trade, craft, or business.

**manumit** To free from slavery or bondage.

**demographics** Statistical data on population.

The migration west, whether by native-born or immigrant white colonists, gradually shifted the population center of mainland society. Newcomers from Europe and Britain, as well as descendants of original New England settlers and the younger sons of the tidewater Chesapeake, all saw their best opportunities in the sparsely settled regions of the frontier. The westward flow of settlers was part of the American landscape throughout the century, but it became a flood after 1760. A seemingly endless train of wagons moved along Indian paths to the west, and the rivers were crowded with rafts carrying families, farm tools, and livestock. Many of these new immigrants traveled south from Pennsylvania along a wagon road that ran 800 miles from Philadelphia to Virginia, North Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia. Others chose to remain in the Middle Colonies. New York's population rose 39 percent between 1760 and 1776, and in 1769, on the day the land office opened at Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh), over twenty-seven hundred applicants showed up to register for land.

**Scots-Irish** Protestant Scottish settlers in British-occupied northern Ireland, many of whom migrated to the colonies in the eighteenth century.

By 1760, perhaps 700,000 new colonists had made their homes in the mainland colonies. In the early part of the century, the largest immigrant group was the **Scots-Irish**. Later, German settlers dominated. But an occasional traveler on the wagon roads might be Italian, Swiss, Irish, Welsh, or a European Jew. Most striking, the number of British immigrants swelled after 1760, causing anger and alarm within the British government. The steady stream of young English men and women out of the country prompted government officials to consider passing laws curbing emigration. But unemployment, poverty, the oppression of landlords, and crop failures pushed men and women out of Europe or Britain, while the availability of cheap land, a greater likelihood of religious freedom, and the chance to pursue a craft successfully pulled others toward the colonies.

## Conflicts Among the Colonists

- ★ **What events illustrated the tensions between races in colonial society?**
- ★ **What conflicts arose between elites and poorer colonists?**

The strains of economic inequality being felt in every region of mainland British America frequently erupted into violent confrontations. At the same time, tensions between Indians and colonists continued, and tensions between black and white colonists increased as both slave and free black populations grew during the eighteenth century. In almost every decade, blood was shed as colonist battled colonist over economic opportunity, personal freedom, western lands, or political representation.

### Slave Revolts, North and South

White slave masters in both the Chesapeake and the Lower South knew that a slave revolt was always a possibility, for enslaved Africans and African Americans shared with other colonists what one observer called a “fondness for freedom.”

Planters thus took elaborate precautions to prevent rebellions, assembling armed patrols that policed the roads and woods near their plantations. These patrols were usually efficient, and the punishment they inflicted was deadly. Even if rebels escaped immediate capture, few safe havens were available to them. Individual runaways had a hard time sustaining their freedom, but dozens of rebels from one plantation were usually doomed once whites on neighboring plantations were alerted. Despite these odds, slaves continued to seek their liberty, often timing their revolts to coincide with epidemics or imperial wars that distracted the white community.

The most famous slave revolt of the eighteenth century, the **Stono Rebellion**, took place in the midst of a yellow fever epidemic in Charles Town just as news of war between England and Spain reached the colony. Early on a Sunday morning in September 1739, about twenty slaves gathered at the Stono River, south of Charles Town. Their leader, Jemmy, had been born in Africa, possibly in the Congo but more likely Angola, for twenty or more of those who eventually joined the revolt were Angolan. The rebels seized guns and gunpowder, killed several planter families and storekeepers, and then headed south. Rather than traveling quietly through the woods, the rebels marched boldly in open view, beating drums to invite slaves on nearby plantations to join them in their flight to Spanish Florida. Other slaves answered the call, and the Stono rebels' ranks grew to almost one hundred. But in Charles Town, planters were gathering to put an end to the uprising. By late Sunday afternoon, white militias had overtaken and surrounded the escaping slaves. The Stono rebels stood and fought, but the militiamen killed almost thirty of them. Those who were captured were executed. Those who escaped into the countryside were hunted down.

The Stono Rebellion terrified white South Carolinians, who hurried to make the colony's already harsh slave codes even more brutal. The government increased the slave patrols in both size and frequency. It also raised the bounties, or rewards offered for the capture of runaways, to make sure that fleeing slaves taken alive and unharmed, or brought in dead and scalped, were worth hunting down.

Hostilities between black colonists and white colonists were not confined to the South. In the crowded environment of New York City, white residents showed the same fear of slave rebellions as seen in Carolina or Virginia planters. Their fears became reality at midnight on April 6, 1712, when two dozen blacks, armed with guns and swords, set fire to a downtown building. Startled New Yorkers who rushed to keep the flames from spreading were attacked by the rebels, leaving nine people shot, stabbed, or beaten to death. Militia units from as far away as Westchester were called out to quell the riot and to cut off any hope of escape for the slaves. Realizing the hopelessness of their situation, six committed suicide. Those who were taken alive suffered horrible punishment. According to the colonial governor, "some were burnt, others were hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains in the town." Twenty-nine years later in 1741, eleven fires allegedly set by African Americans moved white residents to violent reprisals. More than one hundred of the city's black residents were arrested—18 of them were hanged and 18 burned alive.

### Clashes Between the Rich and the Poor

Most often, class tensions erupted into violence as tenant farmers battled landlords or their agents and backcountry farmers took up arms against the elite planters who dominated their colonial governments. New York tenant farmers

had long resented the economic power that manor lords wielded over their lives, and protests—labeled “land riots” by the wealthy landlords—were common throughout the century. Likewise, New Jersey landlords who tried to squeeze higher rents out of their tenants provoked bitterness—and frequent bloodshed. In January 1745, tenants in Essex County, New Jersey, rioted after three of their number were arrested by local authorities. When the sheriff tried to bring one of the alleged troublemakers to the county courthouse, he was “assaulted by a great number of persons, with clubbs and other weapons,” who rescued the prisoner. Such tenant uprisings in both colonies continued during the 1750s and 1760s, as landless men expressed their resentment and frustration at their inability to acquire land of their own.

**Stono Rebellion** Slave revolt in South Carolina in 1739; it prompted the colony to pass harsher laws governing the movement of slaves and the capture of runaways.

# Investigating America

## The Stono Rebellion, 1739

In South Carolina, the only British mainland colony to have a black majority population, an armed revolt by Africans was cause for concern in both Charles Town and London. In the first document, Lieutenant Governor William Bull reports on the uprising to the Board of Trade. In the second, a legislative committee makes recommendations to the governor's council on how to best avoid revolts in the future.

*William Bull to Board of Trade:* It was the Opinion of His Majesty's Council with several other Gentlemen that one of the most effectual means that could be used at present to prevent such desertion of our Negroes is to encourage some Indians by a suitable reward to pursue and if possible to bring back the Deserters, and while the Indians are thus employed they would be in the way ready to intercept others that might attempt to follow and I have sent for the Chiefs of the Chickasaws living at New Windsor and the Catawbaw Indians for that purpose.

*Legislative Committee:* That upon Inquiry your Committee find that a negro man named July belonging to Mr. Thomas Elliott was very early and chiefly instrumental in saving his Master and his Family from being

destroyed by the Rebellious Negroes and that the Negro man July had at several times bravely fought against the Rebels and killed one of them. Your Committee therefore recommends that the [said] Negro July (as a reward for his faithful Services and for an Encouragement to other Slaves to follow his Example in case of the like Nature) shall have his Freedom and a Present of a Suit of Cloaths, Shirt, Hat, a pair of stockings and a pair of Shoes.

- Why did William Bull regard the Chickasaws as useful allies in dealing with African rebels or runaways?
- How did the white minority in South Carolina employ classic divide-and-conquer techniques in dealing with Indians and slaves?
- Why might the slave named July have sided with his master about Jemmy and the Stono rebels?
- What do July's actions say about the limited range of options for captured Africans in the Americas?

Source: Reprinted from Mark M. Smith, ed., *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt* (Columbia, 2005).



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In the backcountry, settlers were likely to face two enemies: Indians and the established political powers of their own colonies. Often the clashes with the colonial government were about Indian policy. Eighteenth-century colonial legislatures and governors preferred diplomacy to military action, but western settlers wanted a more aggressive program to push Indians out of the way. Even when frontier hostilities led to bloodshed, the colonists of the coastal communities were reluctant to spend tax money to provide protection along the settlement line. In the end, bitter western settlers frequently took matters into their own hands. Bacon's Rebellion was the best example of this kind of vigilante action in the seventeenth century.

The revolt by Pennsylvania's Paxton Boys was the most dramatic eighteenth-century episode. More than most colonies, Pennsylvania's Quaker-dominated government encouraged settlers to find peaceful ways to coexist with local tribes. But the eighteenth-century Scots-Irish settlers did not share the Quaker commitment to pacifism. They demanded protection against Indian raids on isolated homesteads and small frontier towns. In 1763 frustrated settlers from Paxton, Pennsylvania, attacked a village of peaceful Conestogans. Although the murder of these Indians solved nothing and could not

be justified, hundreds of western colonists supported this vigilante group known as the Paxton Boys. The group marched on Philadelphia, the capital city of Pennsylvania, to press their demands for an aggressive Indian policy. With Philadelphia residents fearing their city would be attacked and looted, the popular printer Benjamin Franklin met the **Paxton Boys** on the outskirts of the city and negotiated a truce. The outcome was a dramatic shift in Pennsylvania Indian policy, illustrated by an official bounty for Indian scalps.

**Paxton Boys** Settlers in Paxton, Pennsylvania, who massacred Conestogans in 1763 and then marched on Philadelphia to demand that the colonial government provide better defense against the Indians.

## Reason and Religion in Colonial Society

- ★ **What political and personal expectations arose from Enlightenment philosophy?**
- ★ **What was the impact of the Great Awakening on colonial attitudes toward authority?**

Trade routes tied the eighteenth-century colonial world to parent societies across the Atlantic. The bonds of language and custom tied the immigrant communities in America to their homelands too. In addition to these economic and cultural ties, the flow of ideas and religious beliefs helped sustain a transatlantic community.

### The Impact of the Enlightenment

At the end of the seventeenth century, a new intellectual movement arose in Europe: the **Enlightenment**. Enlightenment thinkers argued that reason, or rational thinking, rather than divine revelation was the true path to reliable knowledge and to human progress. A group of brilliant French thinkers called **philosophes**, including Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Montesquieu, were among the central figures of the Enlightenment, along with English philosophers such as John Locke and Isaac Newton and Scotland's David Hume. These philosophers, political theorists, and scientists disagreed about many issues, but all embraced the belief that human nature was basically good rather than flawed by original sin. Humans, they insisted, were rational and capable of making progress toward a perfect society if they studied nature, unlocked its secrets, and carefully nurtured the best human qualities in themselves and their children. This belief in progress and perfectibility became a central Enlightenment theme.

The Enlightenment was the handiwork of a small, intensely intellectual elite in Europe, and only the colonial elite had access to the books and essays that these philosophers produced. Elite colonists were drawn to two aspects of Enlightenment thought: its new religious philosophy of **deism** and the political theory of the "social contract." Deism appealed to colonists such as the Philadelphia scientist Benjamin Franklin and Virginia planters George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, men who were intensely interested in science and the scientific method. Deists believed that the universe operated according to logical, natural laws, without divine intervention. They denied the existence of any miracles after the Creation and rejected the value of prayer in this rational universe.

The most widely accepted Enlightenment ideas in the colonies were those of the English political theorist John Locke, who published his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690 and *Two Treatises of Government* in 1691. In his political essays Locke argued that human beings have certain natural rights that they cannot give away—or alienate—and that no one can take from them. Those rights include the right to own themselves and their own labor and the right to own that part of nature on which they

**Enlightenment** An eighteenth-century intellectual movement that stressed the pursuit of knowledge through reason and challenged the value of religious belief, emotion, and tradition.

**philosophe** Any of the popular French intellectuals or social philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire, Diderot, or Rousseau.

**deism** The belief that God created the universe in such a way that it could operate without any further divine intervention such as miracles.

**social contract** A theoretical agreement between the governed and the government that defines and limits the rights and obligations of each.

have labored productively—that is, their property. In exchange for the government's protection of their natural rights to life, liberty, and property, people make a social contract to give up absolute freedom and to live under a rule of law. According to Locke, the government created by the **social contract** receives its political power from the consent of those it governs. In Locke's scheme, the people express their will, or their demands and interests, through a representative assembly, and the government is obligated to protect and respect the natural rights of its citizens. If the government fails to do this, Locke said, the people have a right, even a duty, to rebel. Locke's theory was especially convincing because it meshed with political developments in England from the civil war to the Glorious Revolution that were familiar to the colonists.

### Religion and Religious Institutions

Deism attracted little attention among ordinary colonists, but many eighteenth-century Americans were impressed by the growing religious diversity of their society. The waves of immigration had greatly increased the number of Protestant

sects in the colonies, and colonists began to see religious toleration as a practical matter. The commitment to religious toleration did not come at an even pace, of course, nor did it extend to everyone. No colony allowed Catholics to vote after Rhode Island disfranchised Catholics in 1729, and even Maryland did not permit Catholics to celebrate Mass openly until Catholics in the city of Baltimore broke the law and founded a church in 1763. Connecticut granted freedom of worship to “sober dissenters” such as Anglicans, Quakers, and Baptists as early as 1708, but in 1750 its legislature declared it a felony to deny the **Trinity**. When colonists spoke of religious toleration, they did not mean the separation of church and state. On the contrary, the tradition of an **established church**, supported by taxes from all members of a community regardless of where they worshiped, went unchallenged in the southern colonies, where Anglicanism was established, and in Massachusetts and Connecticut, where **Congregationalism** was established.

As the diversity in churches was growing, the number of colonists who did not regularly attend any church at all was growing too. Some colonists were more preoccupied with secular concerns, such as their place in the economic community, than with spiritual ones. Others were losing their devotion to churches where the sermons were more intellectual than impassioned and the worship service was more formal than inspiring.

Into this moment stepped that group of **charismatic** preachers who, like Jonathan Edwards, denounced the obsession with profit and wealth they saw around them, condemned the sinfulness and depravity of all people, warned of the terrible punishments of eternal hellfires, and praised the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In a society divided by regional disputes, racial conflicts, and economic competition, these preachers held out a promise of social harmony based on the surrender of individual pride and a renewed love and fear of God. In voices filled with “Thunder and Lightning,” they called for a revival of basic Protestant belief.

### The Great Awakening

The religious revival of the eighteenth century was based as much on a new approach to preaching as on the message itself. This new-style preaching first appeared in New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the 1720s, when two **itinerant** preachers—

Theodore Frelinghuysen and William Tennent Jr.—began calling the local churches to task for lack of devotion to God and for “cold” preaching. Tennent established what he called a “log college” to train fiery preachers who could spread a Christian revival throughout

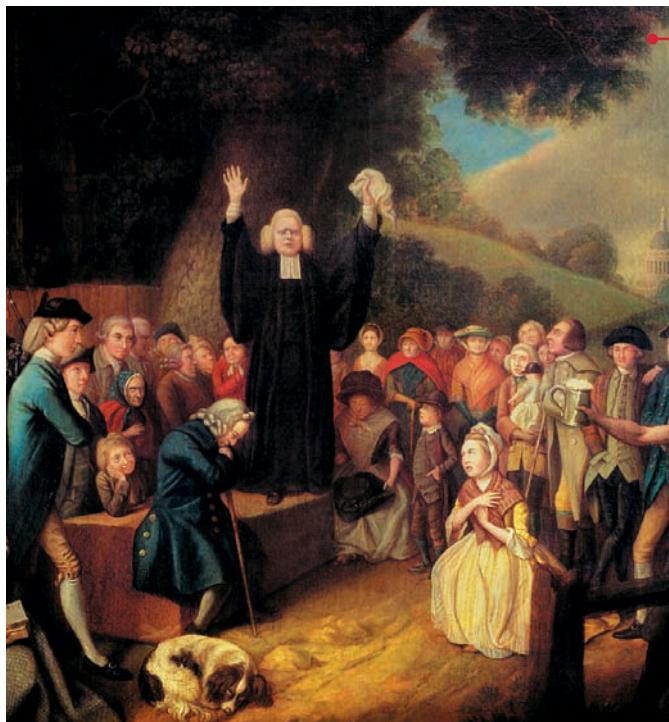
**Trinity** In Christian doctrine, the belief that God has three divine aspects—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**established church** The official church of a nation or colony, usually supported by taxes collected from all citizens, no matter what their religious beliefs or place of worship.

**Congregationalism** A form of Protestant church government in which the local congregation is independent and self-governing; in the colonies, the Puritans were Congregationalists.

**charismatic** Having a spiritual power or personal quality that stirs enthusiasm and devotion in large numbers of people.

**itinerant** Traveling from place to place.



The English evangelical minister, George Whitefield, inspired awe and prompted renewed commitment to Christianity everywhere he preached. Crowds overflowed into the fields outside of colonial country churches, and men and women in his audiences often fainted or cried out in ecstasy. Bridgeman Art Library Ltd.

the colonies. Soon afterward, Jonathan Edwards spread the revival to Massachusetts. Like Frelinghuysen and Tennent, Edwards berated the lukewarm preaching of local ministers and then turned to the task of saving lost souls. The revival, or **Great Awakening**, sparked by men like Edwards and Tennent, spread rapidly throughout the colonies, carried from town to town by the wandering ministers called “Awakeners.” These preachers stirred entire communities to renewed religious devotion.

The Great Awakening’s success was ensured in 1740, when **George Whitefield** toured the colonies from Charles Town to Maine. Everywhere this young preacher went, crowds gathered to hear him. Often the audiences grew so large that church sanctuaries could not hold them and Whitefield would finish his service in a nearby field. His impact was electric. “Hearing him preach gave me a heart wound,” wrote one colonist, and even America’s most committed deist, Benjamin Franklin, confessed that Whitefield’s sermons moved him. Whitefield himself recorded his effect on a crowd: “A wonderful power was in the room and with one accord they began to cry out and weep most bitterly for the space of half an hour.”

The Great Awakening did not go unchallenged. Some ministers, angered by the criticisms of their preaching and suggestions that they themselves were unsaved, launched a counterattack against the revivalists and their “beastly brayings.” “Old Light” Congregationalists upheld the established service but “New Lights” chose revivalism, and “Old Side” Presbyterians battled “New Sides” over preaching styles and the content of the worship service. Congregations split, and the minority groups hurriedly formed new churches. Many awakened believers left their own **denominations** entirely, joining the Baptists or the Methodists. These religious conflicts frequently became intertwined with secular disputes. Colonists who had long-standing disagreements over Indian policy or economic issues lined up on opposite sides of the Awakening. Class tensions influenced

**Great Awakening** A series of religious revivals based on fiery preaching and emotionalism that swept across the colonies during the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

**George Whitefield** English evangelical preacher of the Great Awakening whose charismatic style attracted huge crowds during his preaching tours of the colonies.

**denomination** A group of religious congregations that accept the same doctrines and are united under a single name.

# Investigating America

## George Whitefield, Sermon, 1740

George Whitefield arrived in the colonies at the dawn of King George's War (discussed later in this chapter). Preaching to societies torn by war, slave revolts, economic dislocation, and rising class inequality, the young minister initially desired nothing more than to save American souls. Just exactly what Americans heard in his sermons, however, depended on their class, their gender, their race, and their region. In this sermon, delivered in Philadelphia, Whitefield urged city dwellers to put aside their dreams of worldly goods in favor of Christian brotherhood.

.....  
I would speak a few words to you before I part from you this evening, by way of application. Let me beseech you to come to Jesus Christ; I invite you all to come to him and receive him as your Lord and Savior; he is ready to receive you; if you are afraid to go because you are in a lost condition, he came to save such; and to such as were weary and heavy laden, such as feel the weight and burden of their sins, he has promised he will give rest.

O come and drink of the water of life; you may buy without money and without price; he is laboring to bring you back from sin, and from Satan unto himself: open the door of your hearts, and the King of glory shall enter in. But if you are strangers to this doctrine, and account it foolishness; or, if you think you have enough of your own to recommend you to the favor of God, however you may go to church, or receive

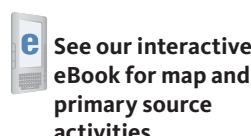
the sacrament, you have no true love to the Lord Jesus Christ; you are strangers to the truth of grace in your hearts, and are unacquainted with the new-birth; you do not know what it is to have your natures changed; and 'till you do experience these things, you never can enter into the kingdom of God.

What shall I say, my brethren, unto you? My heart is full, it is quite full, and I must speak, or I shall burst. What, do you think your souls of no value? Are your pleasures worth more than your souls? Had you rather regard the diversions of this life, than the salvation of your souls? If so, you will never be partakers with him in glory; but if you come unto him, he will give you a new nature, supply you with his grace here, bring you to glory hereafter; and there you may sing praises and hallelujahs o the Lamb forever.

- .....
- What comfort might urban artisans or the working poor have derived from Whitefield's words?
  - How might this sermon encourage the political demands of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy who resented the influence of Philadelphia's merchant elite?
  - The city was also home to a small number of slaves. What might they hear in this sermon?

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From SELECT SERMONS OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD, edited by J.C. Ryle. © 1958 by Banner of Truth.



religious loyalties, as poor colonists pronounced judgment on their rich neighbors using religious vocabulary that equated luxury, dancing, and gambling with sin.

Thus, rather than fulfilling its promise of social harmony, the Great Awakening increased strife and tension among colonists. Yet it had positive effects as well. For example, the Awakening spurred the growth of higher education. During the complicated theological arguments between Old Lights and Awakeners, the revivalists came to see the value of theological training. They founded new colleges, including Rutgers, Brown, Princeton, and Dartmouth, to prepare their clergy just as the Old Lights relied on Harvard and Yale to train theirs. One of the most important effects of the Great Awakening was also one of the least expected. The resistance to authority, the activism involved in creating new institutions, the participation in debate and argument—these experiences reinforced a sense that protest and resistance were acceptable, not just in religious matters but in the realm of politics as well.

## Government and Politics in the Mainland Colonies

- ★ What circumstances limited a colonial governor's exercise of royal power?
- ★ What was the result of the struggle for power between the colonial assemblies and the colonial governors?

The English mainland colonies were part of a large and complex empire, and the English government had created many agencies to set and enforce imperial policy. Parliament passed laws regulating colonial affairs, the royal navy determined colonial defense, and English diplomats decided which foreign nations were friends and which were foes. But from the beginning, most **proprietors**, joint-stock companies, and kings had also found it convenient to create local governments within their colonies to handle day-to-day affairs. Virginia's House of Burgesses was the first locally elected legislative body in the colonies, but by 1700 every mainland colony boasted a representative assembly generally made up of its wealthiest men.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the British government decided to restructure its colonial administration, hoping to make it more efficient. Despite this reorganization, the government was notably lax in enforcing colonial regulations. Even so, colonists often objected to the constraints of imperial law and challenged the role of the king or the proprietors in shaping local political decisions. This **insubordination** led to a long and steady struggle for power between colonial governors and colonial assemblies. Over the first half of the century, the colonists did wrest important powers from the governors. But the British government remained adamant that ultimate power, or **sovereignty**, rested in the hands of king and Parliament.

### Imperial Institutions and Policies

By the eighteenth century, the British government had divided responsibility for colonial regulation and management among several departments, commissions, and agencies. Even though the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations had been created in 1696 to coordinate the Empire's rules and regulations for the colonies, authority remained fragmented. The treasury board, for example, continued to supervise all colonial financial affairs, and its customs office collected all trade revenues. The admiralty board, however, had the authority to enforce trade regulations. The potential for conflict among all these departments, commissions, and agencies was great. But British indifference to colonial affairs helped to preserve harmony.

Parliament set the tone for colonial administration in the eighteenth century with a **policy** that came to be known unofficially as **salutary neglect**. Salutary, or healthy, neglect meant the government was satisfied with relaxed enforcement of most regulations so long as the colonies remained loyal in military and economic matters. As long as specific, or **enumerated**, colonial raw materials continued to flow into British hands and the colonists purchased British manufactured goods, salutary neglect suited the expectations of the king and Parliament.

Yet, even in purely domestic matters, the colonial governments could not operate as freely as many of them desired. The most intense political conflicts before the 1760s centered on the colonial assemblies' power to govern local affairs as they chose.

### Local Colonial Government

The eighteenth-century mainland colonies remained a mixture of royal, proprietary, and corporate colonies, although most of them were held directly by the king. Whatever the form of ownership, however, the colonies were strikingly

**proprietor** In colonial America, a proprietor was a wealthy Englishman who received a large grant of land from the monarch in order to create a new colony.

**insubordination** Resistance to authority; disobedience.

**sovereignty** The ultimate power in a nation or a state.

**policy** A course of action taken by a government or a ruler.

**salutary neglect** The British policy of relaxed enforcement of most colonial trade regulations as long as the mainland colonies remained loyal to the government and profitable within the British economy.

**enumerated** Added to the list of regulated goods or crops.

**corporate colony** A self-governing colony, not directly under the control of proprietors or the Crown.

**bureaucrat** A government official, usually appointed, who is deeply devoted to the details of administrative procedures.

**power of the purse** The political power that is enjoyed by the branch of government that controls taxation and the use of tax monies.

**deference** Yielding to the judgment or wishes of a social or intellectual superior.

similar in the structure and operation of their governments. Each colony had a governor appointed by the king or the proprietor or, in Connecticut and Rhode Island (the two **corporate colonies**), elected to executive office. Each had a council, usually appointed by the governor, though sometimes elected by the assembly, which served as an advisory body to the governor. And each had an elected representative assembly with lawmaking and taxing powers.

The governor was the lynchpin of local government because he represented royal authority and imperial interests in the local setting. In theory, his powers were impressive. Yet, a closer look reveals that the governor was not so powerful after all. First, in many cases he was not free to exercise his own judgment because he was bound by a set of instructions written by the board of trade. Though highly detailed, these instructions often bore little relation to the realities the governor encountered in his colony. Second, the governor's own skills and experience were often limited. Few men in the prime of their careers sought provincial posts 3,000 miles from England. Thus governorships went to **bureaucrats** nearing the end of sometimes unimpressive careers or to younger men who were new to the rough-and-tumble games of politics. Many colonial governors were honorable and competent, but enough of them were fools to give the office a poor reputation.

The most significant restraint on the governor's authority was not his rigid instructions, his inexperience, or his lack of patronage, but the fact that the assembly paid his salary. England expected the colonists to foot the bill for local government, including compensation for the governor. Governors who challenged the assembly too strongly or too often usually found a sudden, unaccountable budget crisis delaying or diminishing their allowances. Those who bent to assembly wishes could expect bonuses in the form of cash or grants of land.

Although the governors learned that their great powers were not so great after all, the assemblies in every colony were making an opposite discovery: they learned they could broaden their powers far beyond the king's intent. They fought for and won more freedom from the governor's supervision and influence, gaining the right to elect their own speaker of the assembly, make their own procedural rules, and settle contested elections. They also increased their power over taxation and the use of revenues, or, in eighteenth-century parlance, their **power of the purse**.

In their pursuit of power, these local political leaders had several advantages besides the governor's weakness. They came from a small social and economic elite who were regularly elected to office for both practical and social reasons. First, they could satisfy the high property qualifications set for most officeholding. Second, they could afford to accept an office that cost more to win and to hold than its modest salary could cover. Third, a habit of **deference**—respect for the opinions and decisions of the more educated and wealthy families in a community—won them office. Although as many as 50 to 80 percent of adult free white males in a colony could vote, few were considered suitable to hold office. Generations of fathers and sons from elite families thus dominated political offices. These men knew one another well, and although they fought among themselves for positions and power, they could effectively unite against outsiders such as an arrogant governor.

### Conflicting Views of the Assemblies

The king and Parliament gave local assemblies the authority to raise taxes, pay government salaries, direct the care of the poor, and maintain bridges and roads. To the colonists, this division of authority indicated an acceptance of a two-tiered

system of government: (1) a central government that created and executed imperial policy and (2) a set of local governments that managed colonial domestic affairs. If these levels of government were not equal in their power and scope, at least—in the minds of the colonists—they were equally legitimate. On both points, however, the British disagreed. They did not acknowledge a multilevel system. They saw a single, vast empire ruled by one government consisting of King and Parliament. The colonial governments may have acquired the power to establish temporary operating procedures and to pass minor laws, but British leaders did not believe they had acquired a share of the British government's sovereign power. As the governor of Pennsylvania put it in 1726, the assembly's decisions should not interfere "with the Legal Prerogative of the Crown or the true Legislative Power of the Mother State."

## North America and the Struggle for Empire

- ★ **What were the diplomatic and military goals of Europeans and American Indians in North America?**
- ★ **How did the English victory in 1763 affect people in North America?**

During the seventeenth century, most of the violence and warfare in colonial America arose from struggles either between Indians and colonists over land or among colonists over political power and the use of revenues and resources. These struggles continued to be important during the eighteenth century. By 1690, however, the most persistent dangers to colonial peace and safety came from the fierce rivalries between the French, Spanish, and the English (see Map 4.1). Between 1688 and 1763, these European powers waged five bloody and costly wars. Most of these conflicts were motivated by politics at home, although colonial ambitions spurred the last and most decisive of them. No matter where these worldwide wars began, or what their immediate cause, colonists were usually drawn into them.

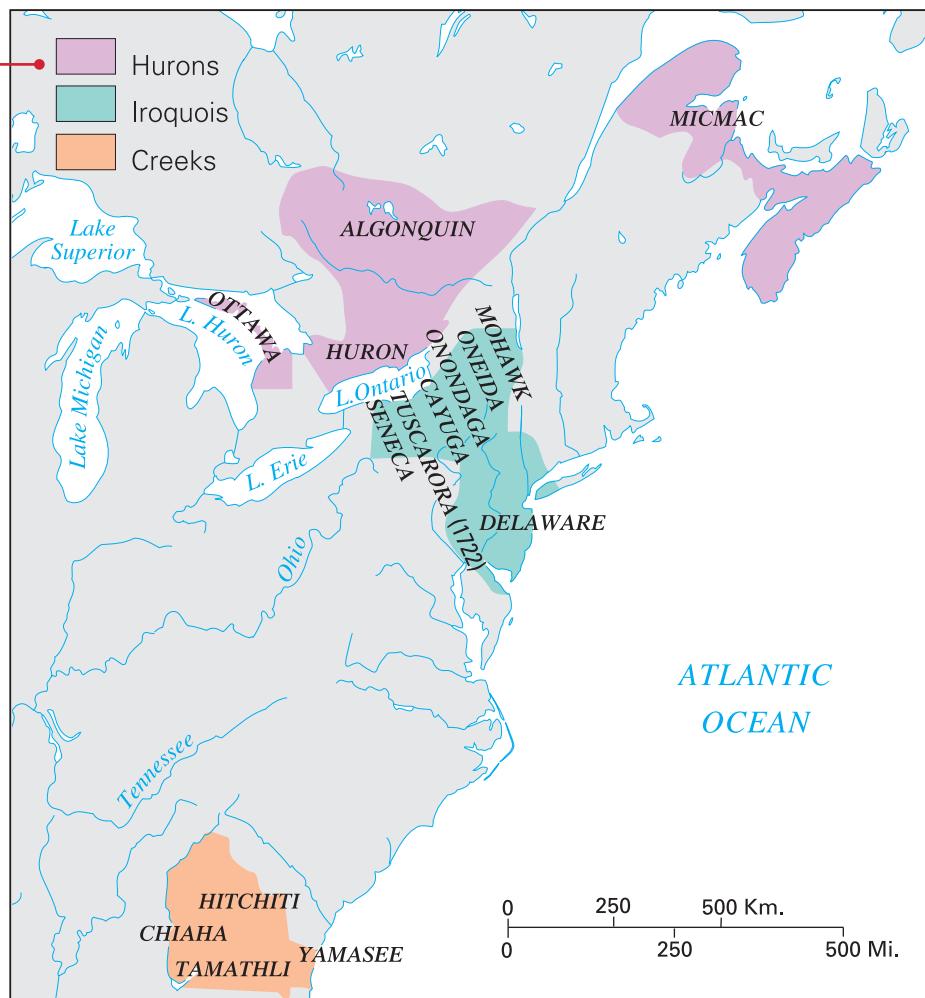
When imperial wars included fighting in America, English colonists were expected to fight without the assistance of British troops. Often the enemy the colonists faced was neither French nor Spanish but Indian, a result of the alliances Indians had formed with Europeans to advance their own interests. For example, until the mid-seventeenth century, the Huron dominated confederacy to the north supported the French (see Map 4.2). These two allies had a strong economic bond: the French profited from the fur trade while the Hurons enjoyed the benefits of European manufactured goods. The English colonists were not without their Indian allies, however. Ties with the Iroquois League were carefully nurtured by the English, who appreciated the advantages of friendship with Indians living south of the Great Lakes, along crucial fur trading routes. For their part, the Iroquois were willing to cooperate with a European power who was the enemy of their perpetual rival, the Hurons. The southern English colonists turned to the **Creek Confederacy** when wars with Spain erupted. Yet the colonists' own land hunger always worked to undermine these Indian alliances. The southern tribes' support was unreliable, and the Iroquois, wary of the English westward expansion, often chose to pursue an independent strategy of neutrality.

The wars that raged from 1689 until 1763 were part of a grand effort by rival European nations to control the balance of power at home and abroad. The colonists often felt like pawns in the hands of the more powerful players, and resentment sometimes overshadowed their patriotic pride when England was victorious. Whatever their views on imperial diplomacy, few colonists escaped the impact of this nearly century-long struggle for

**Creek Confederacy** Alliance of the Creeks and smaller Indian tribes living in the Southeast.

**MAP 4.2** The Indian Confederacies

This map shows the three major Indian military and political coalitions—the Huron, Iroquois, and Creek Confederacies. Unlike the squabbling English mainland colonies, these Indian tribes understood the value of military unity in the face of threats to their land and their safety and the importance of diplomatic unity in negotiating with their European allies.



power between England, France, and Spain. Periods of peace were short and the long shadow of war hung over them until Britain's major triumph in 1763.

**An Age of Imperial Warfare**

William and Mary's ascent to the throne in 1689 ushered in an era of political stability and religious tolerance in Britain. But it also ushered in an age of imperial warfare. Almost immediately, France took up arms against England, Holland, Sweden, and Spain in what the Europeans called the War of the League of Augsburg; colonists called it simply King William's War. With France as the enemy, New England and New York bore the brunt of the fighting. Because the English sent no troops to defend the border communities, colonial armies, composed largely of untrained militia companies, and their Iroquois allies defended British interests in this long and vicious war. When the war finally ended with the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, 659 New Englanders had perished. The death toll for the Iroquois nations was higher—between 600 and 1,300. The lessons of the war were equally apparent. First, colonists paid a high price for their disunity and lack of cooperation. Second, no New Englander could ever feel secure until the French had been driven out of Canada. Third, the colonists needed the aid of the English army and navy to effectively drive the French away.

The colonists had little time to enjoy peace. Five years later, in 1702, the conflict that colonists called Queen Anne's War began, once again pitting France and its now dependent ally, Spain, against England, Holland, and Austria. In this eleven-year struggle, colonists faced enemies on both their southern and northern borders. Once again, those enemies included Indians. Between 1711 and 1713, southern colonists were caught up in fierce warfare with the Tuscaroras, who were angered by North Carolina land seizures. The casualties were staggering. Some 150 settlers were killed in the opening hours of the war, and in the following months both sides outdid one another in cruelty. Stakes were run through the bodies of women, children were murdered, and Indian captives were roasted alive. South Carolina and Virginia sent arms and supplies to aid the North Carolina colonists, and the Creek and Yamasee Indians fought beside the white settlers against the Tuscaroras. When this war-within-a-war ended in 1713, more than a thousand Tuscaroras were dead and nearly four hundred had been sold into slavery. The survivors took refuge in the land of the Iroquois.

The war, which ended in 1713, cost New Englanders dearly. The high death toll of King William's War and Queen Anne's War was staggering: nearly 1 of every 4 soldiers in uniform had died. The financial cost was equally devastating. Four-fifths of Massachusetts revenues in 1704–1705 went for military expenses. Homeowners in Boston saw their taxes rise 42 percent between 1700 and 1713. The city's streets were filled with beggars and its homes with widows. In Connecticut and Massachusetts, colonists spoke bitterly of the Mother Country's failure to protect them; yet this time New Englanders could see tangible gains from the imperial struggle. The English flag now flew over Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Hudson Bay, which meant that Maine settlers no longer had to fear enemy raids. New England fleets could fish the cod-rich waters of Newfoundland more safely. And colonial fur traders could profit from Hudson Bay's resources.

At the end of the 1730s, a period of calm in Europe was fractured. By 1740, France, Spain, and Prussia were at war with England and its ally, Austria. This war, known in the colonies as King George's War, again meant enemy attacks on both the northern and southern colonies. New Englanders, swept up in the Great Awakening, viewed the war as a Protestant crusade against Catholicism, a holy war designed to rid the continent of religious enemies. Yet when the war ended in 1748, France still retained its Canadian territories.

### The Great War for Empire

Despite three major wars and countless border conflicts, the map of North America had changed very little. Colonial efforts to capture Canada or to rid the Southwest of Indian enemies had not succeeded. But in 1756, Europe was dragged into a colonial war. Westward expansion deeper into North America triggered a great war for empire, referred to in Europe as the Seven Years' War and in the colonies as the French and Indian War.

The problem began in the 1740s, as the neutral zone between the French colonial empire and the British mainland settlements began to shrink. As thousands of new immigrants poured into the English colonies, the colonists pressed farther westward, toward the Ohio Valley. This migration alarmed the French, who had plans to unite their mainland empire, connecting Canada and Louisiana with a chain of forts and trading posts across the Ohio Valley. In response, the British decided to send an expedition to assess French strength and warn the French to abandon a new fort. Virginia's governor, Robert Dinwiddie, chose an inexperienced young planter and colonial militia officer, Major George Washington, to lead the expedition. When Washington conveyed the warning in 1754, the French commander responded with insulting sarcasm. Tensions escalated

rapidly. Dinwiddie ordered Washington to challenge the French at Fort Duquesne, near present-day Pittsburgh, but the French forced him to surrender.

Fearing another war, colonial political leaders knew it was time to act decisively—and to attempt cooperation. In June 1754, seven colonies sent representatives to Albany, New York, to organize a united defense. Unfortunately this effort at cooperation failed. When the Albany Plan of Union was presented to the colonial assemblies, none was willing to approve it. Instead, American colonists looked to Britain to act. This time, Britain did. Parliament sent Major General Edward Braddock, a battle-hardened veteran, to drive the French out of Fort Duquesne. Braddock's humiliating failure was only the first of many for the English in America.

English and French forces engaged each other in battle four times before war was officially declared in 1756. Soon, every major European power was involved, and the fighting spread rapidly across Europe, the Philippines, Africa, India, the Caribbean, and North America. In America, France's Indian allies joined the war more readily than did England's. Iroquois tribes opted for neutrality, waiting until 1759 to throw in their lot with the English. Although Mohawks fought as mercenaries in New York and Iroquois in western Pennsylvania suppressed Delaware attacks on English colonists there, Iroquois support was erratic. In fact, some members of the League, including the Senecas, fought with the French in 1757 and 1758. Given these circumstances, a British defeat seemed likely.

In 1756 the worried British government turned over the direction of the war to the ardent imperialist William Pitt, who was more than willing to take drastic steps. Pitt committed the British treasury to the largest war expenditures the nation had ever known and then put together the largest military force that North America had ever seen, combining 25,000 colonial troops with 24,000 British regulars. The fortunes of war soon reversed. By the end of 1759, the upper Ohio Valley had been taken from the French. And in August of that year, General James Wolfe took the war to the heart of French Canada: the fortress city of Quebec. Captured after the September battle on the Plains of Abraham, Quebec's fall led the surrender of the city of Montreal in 1760. The **Treaty of Paris**, ratified in 1763, established the supremacy of the British Empire.

**Treaty of Paris** The treaty ending the French and Indian War in 1763; it gave all of French Canada and Spanish Florida to Britain.

### The Outcomes of the Great War for Empire

The war had redrawn the map of the world. The French Empire had shriveled, with nothing remaining of New France but two tiny islands between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Ten thousand Acadians—French colonists of Nova Scotia—were refugees of the war, deported from their homes by the English because their loyalty was suspect. Many Acadians made the exhausting trek to French-speaking Louisiana, where over time they became known as Cajuns. The only other remnants of the French Empire in the Western Hemisphere were the sugar islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Domingue, left to France because England's so-called Sugar Interest wanted no further competition in the British market. Across the ocean, France lost trading posts in Africa, and on the other side of the world, the French presence in India vanished.

The 1763 peace treaty dismantled the French Empire but did not destroy France itself. Although the nation's treasury was empty, its borders were intact. France's alliance with Spain held firm, cemented by the experience of defeat. Britain was victorious, but victory did not mean Britain had escaped unharmed. The British government was deeply in debt and faced new problems associated with managing and protecting its greatly enlarged empire.

In the mainland colonies, people lit bonfires and staged parades to celebrate Britain's victory and the safety of their own borders. But the tension of being both members of a

colonial society and citizens of a great empire could not be easily dismissed. The war left scars, including memories of the British military's arrogance toward provincial soldiers and lingering resentment over the quartering of British soldiers at colonial expense. Suspicion, a growing sense of difference, a tug of loyalties between the local community and the larger empire—these were the unexpected outcomes of a glorious victory.

## Summary

Important changes emerged in the British mainland colonies during the eighteenth century. In New England, increased commercial activity and a royal government produced a shift from a “Puritan” culture to a more secular “Yankee” culture. In the South, the planter elite shifted from a labor force of indentured servants to one of African slaves. By midcentury, these enslaved workers had begun to develop their own community life and their own African American culture. The Middle Colonies developed a lively urban culture that contrasted with the backcountry or culture of newly arrived immigrants.

Intellectual life in the eighteenth century also changed. The colonial elite embraced the Enlightenment notion that progress would come through the application of reason rather than from faith. They developed a skepticism about religious dogmas and accepted John

Locke's theory of natural right. At the same time, the Great Awakening unleashed a second, and opposing, intellectual current. Revivalists such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield spurred a renewed pursuit of religious salvation among ordinary colonists. Their message had radical implications, for these “Awakeners” challenged all authority except the individual spirit. A similar challenge to authority emerged in politics and imperial relations. England, France, and Spain fought five major wars between 1688 and 1763. Colonists were expected to defend their own borders in most of the wars. In the French and Indian War, however, the British played an active role in driving the French out of mainland America. Their victory in 1763 altered the colonial map of North America and changed power relations throughout the European world.

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femme sole, p. 74  
unprecedented, p. 75  
subsistence society, p. 76  
absentee planter, p. 76  
tidewater, p. 76  
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# CHAPTER 5

# Deciding Where Loyalties Lie 1763–1776

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### ***Victory's New Problems***

- Dealing with Indian and French Canadian Resistance
- Demanding More from the Colonists
- The Colonial Response
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### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**

- Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, 1776

- Declaring Loyalties

### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**

- Charles Inglis's *The True Interest of America*, 1776

### **Summary**

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Charles Inglis**

Charles Inglis was born in Ireland in 1734. He became an Anglican minister and served six years as a missionary among the Mohawks. In 1765 he became the assistant rector of New York City's prestigious Trinity Church. His delight at the appointment soon turned to dismay, however. The Stamp Act was passed that same year, and many of the colony's leading political figures and ordinary citizens linked the Church of England with the king's plans to oppress the colonists. Despite the open hostility Inglis soon faced, he chose to speak out in defense of both his church and his king.

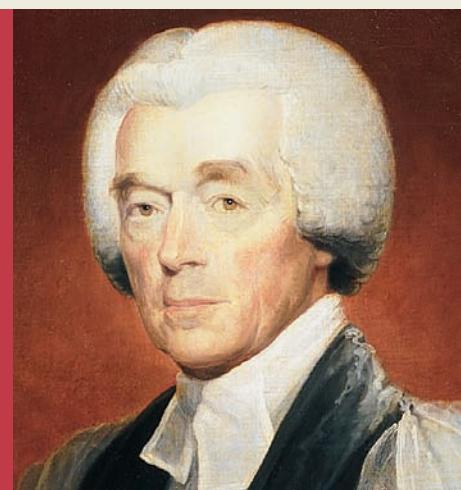
By the 1770s, Inglis was dangerously at odds with his neighbors. He wrote pamphlets and published letters in the local newspapers in support of Parliament's right to tax the colonies and the colonists' duty to submit. When Thomas Paine published his radical *Common Sense* in 1776, Inglis was one of the few conservatives who dared to challenge this open call for revolution. He condemned Paine and warned of the "evils which inevitably must attend our separating" from the Mother Country. Inglis painted a portrait of "the greatest confusion, and most violent convulsions" that would be the inevitable outcome of American protest and resistance to the king's sovereignty. Pointing out the hopelessness of waging a war against the most powerful navy in the world, he reminded Americans that they remained British subjects with "the manners, habits, and ideas of Britons." Those ideas, he added, did not include a republican form of government.

In 1777 Charles Inglis was named rector of Trinity Church. From his pulpit, he continued boldly to pray for the king's well-being, despite the Declaration of Independence. He remained an outspoken loyalist even when his church was burned and the new state government confiscated his personal property. But when the British evacuated New York in 1783, Inglis joined thousand of other loyalists in exile in Nova Scotia. Despite all that he had suffered at the hands of the revolutionaries, he refused to speak bitterly of his American enemies. Instead he wrote: "I do not leave behind me an individual against whom I have the smallest degree of resentment or ill-will."

#### **CHARLES INGLIS**

This portrait of the Anglican bishop Charles Inglis reveals a proud, intelligent, self-confident gentleman. Yet Inglis, like many loyalists, was spurned by his fellow colonists after he wrote a pamphlet urging all Americans to remain loyal to the king. He risked his neighbors' ridicule, he said, because he was a true patriot and a friend to America's best interests.

National Portrait Gallery, London.



# Chronology

<b>1763</b>	Treaty of Paris ends French and Indian War Pontiac's Rebellion Proclamation Line	<b>1772</b>	Burning of the Gaspée
<b>1764</b>	Sugar Act	<b>1773</b>	Tea Act
<b>1765</b>	Stamp Act Sons of Liberty organized Stamp Act Congress Nonimportation of British goods	<b>1774</b>	Boston Tea Party Intolerable Acts First Continental Congress Continental Association Declaration of Rights and Grievances Suffolk Resolves
<b>1766</b>	Stamp Act replaced Declaratory Act	<b>1775</b>	Battles of Lexington and Concord Second Continental Congress Olive Branch Petition
<b>1767</b>	Townshend Acts John Dickson's Letters from <i>Farmer in Pennsylvania</i>		Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms
<b>1768</b>	Nonimportation of British goods Massachusetts Circular Letter	<b>1776</b>	<i>Tom Paine's Common Sense</i> Declaration of Independence Adam Smith publishes <i>Wealth of Nations</i>
<b>1770</b>	Boston Massacre Townshend Acts replaced		

Many colonists believed that Britain's victory in 1763 would usher in a new era of economic growth, westward expansion, and improved cooperation between the Mother Country and colonies. But the colonists' hopes for harmony and goodwill were quickly dashed. Less than two years after the Treaty of Paris ended the war, colonists were protesting Britain's Indian policy and its new trade regulations. In the next thirteen strife-filled years, the colonists and the British government discovered the fundamental political differences that existed between them. They did not agree over the meaning of representative government or the proper division of power between Parliament and the local elected assemblies. And they found themselves in conflict over major imperial policies. English officials thought it made good sense to curtail westward settlement in order to prevent costly Indian wars. But American colonists believed loyal citizens deserved the economic opportunity that westward settlement would provide. The British government and the colonists also disagreed on the obligations the colonists owed to the Empire. The British insisted that the Americans ought to help pay the costs of maintaining that Empire, but the colonists believed that this was the duty of those who remained in the Mother Country. By the 1770s, Americans who had once toasted the king now drank instead to liberty and resistance to tyrants. By 1775, a new choice faced the colonists: loyalty or rebellion. Men such as Charles Inglis were caught in the midst of a struggle they had never anticipated and could not avoid.

The colonists who chose to protest taxation by the British government in 1765 and 1767, or to oppose the creation of juryless courts, or to complain of the presence of troops



# It Matters Today

## THE RIGHT TO DISSENT

Charles Inglis was a man of integrity who considered himself an American patriot. Throughout American history, men and women have opposed political and social choices made by the nation, including the entrance of the United States into World War I, women's suffrage, and the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. The right to dissent, guaranteed by the Constitution, has been a critical part of the American political tradition since the nation began.

- Consider your position on dissent in times of national crisis. Do you believe the government has the right to suppress dissent during times of war or major disasters? Why or why not?
- Examine the key provisions of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1789 and the Patriot Act of 2001. Discuss the impact of modern technology on the government's ability to enforce such laws and on the ability of citizens to oppose or resist them.

in their towns did not know they were laying the groundwork for a revolution. Most of them would have been shocked at the suggestion that they were no longer loyal British patriots. Yet, events between 1763 and 1776 forced these colonists to choose between two versions of patriotism—loyalty to the king or loyalty to colonial independence—and between two visions of the future—as members of a great and powerful Empire or as citizens of a struggling new nation. These events also forced Indians and African Americans to choose an alliance with the king or with the rebels, just as it forced churchmen and royal officials such as Inglis to decide if the solemn oath of allegiance they had taken to the king remained binding.

## Victory's New Problems

- ★ **Why did Prime Minister Grenville expect the colonists to accept part of the burden of financing the British Empire in 1764?**
- ★ **Why were the colonists alarmed by Grenville's 1765 stamp tax?**

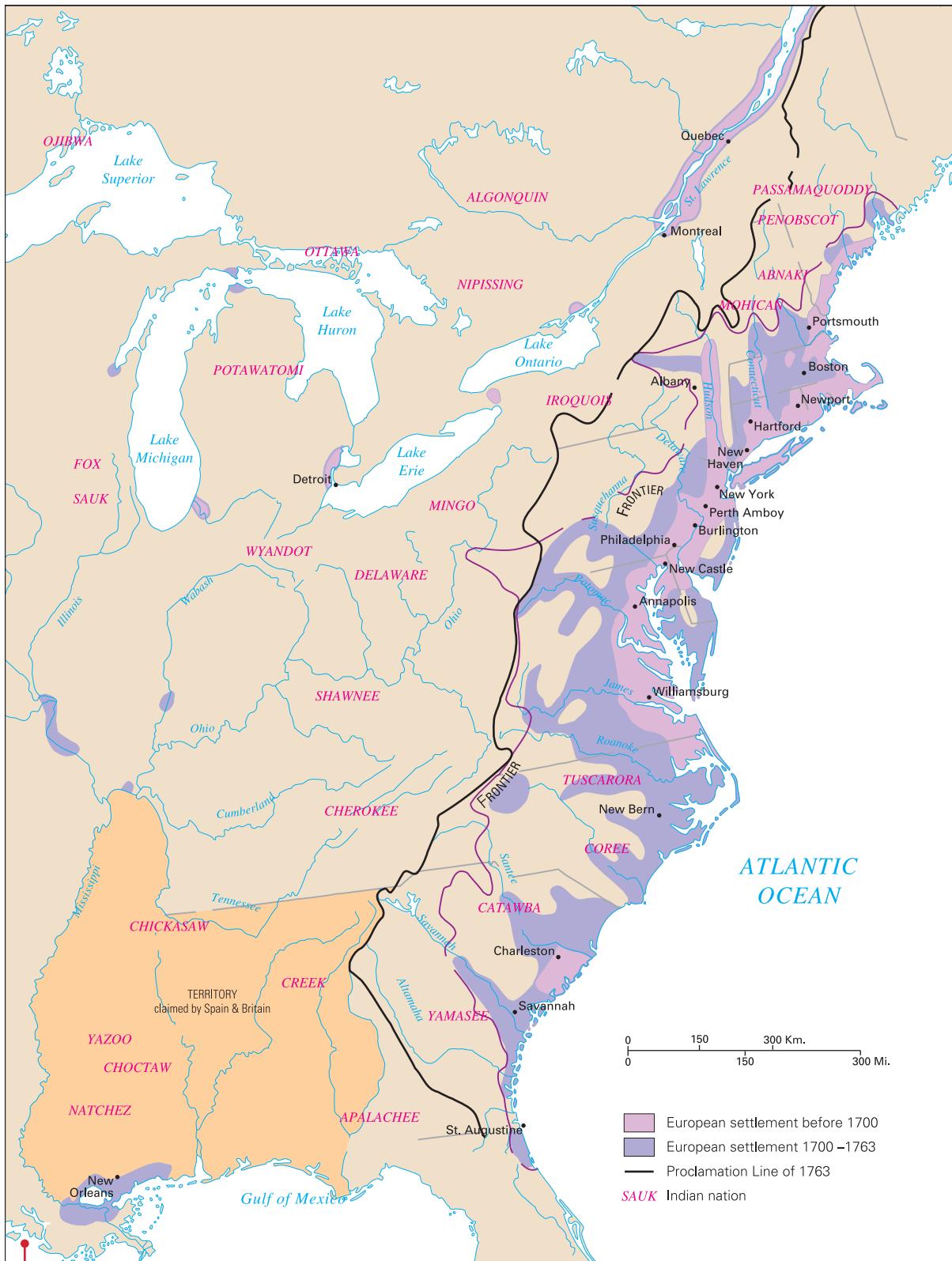
**George III** King of England (r. 1760–1820); his government's policies produced colonial discontent that led to the American Revolution in 1776.

**delusions** A false belief strongly held in spite of evidence to the contrary.

**George Grenville** British prime minister who sought to tighten controls over the colonies and to impose taxes to raise revenues.

In the midst of the French and Indian War, King George II died and, in 1760, his young grandson, **George III**, ascended the throne. At 22, the new monarch was hardworking but highly self-critical, and he was already showing the symptoms of an illness that produced **delusions** and depression. Although he was inexperienced in matters of state, George III meant to rule—even if he had to deal with politicians, whom he distrusted, and engage in politics, which he disliked. He chose **George Grenville**, a practical man, to assist him. It fell to Grenville to handle the two most pressing postwar tasks: negotiating England's victory treaty with France and its allies, and designing Britain's peacetime policies.

Grenville's diplomats met with little resistance at the negotiating table. France was defeated, and it was up to the British government to determine the spoils of war. England could take possession of a French Caribbean sugar island or the vast French mainland territory of Canada (see Map 4.1). English sugar planters raised loud objections to the first option, which would mean new competitors in the profitable English sugar markets. The decision was to add Canada, and support was strong. Doing so ensured the safety of the mainland colonies, whose people were increasingly important as consumers



**MAP 5.1** The Proclamation Line of 1763

This map shows European settlement east of the Appalachian Mountains and the numerous Indian tribes with territorial claims to the lands between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River. The Proclamation Line, which roughly follows the mountain range, was the British government's effort to temporarily halt colonial westward expansion and, thus, to prevent bloodshed between settlers and Indians. This British policy was deeply resented by land-hungry colonists.

of English-made goods. With Canada, too, came the rich fishing grounds off the Newfoundland coast and the fertile lands of the Ohio Valley. By the end of 1763, George III could look with pride on an empire that had grown in physical size, on a nation that dominated the markets of Europe, and on a navy that ruled the seas.

Unfortunately, victory also brought new problems. First, the new English glory did not come cheaply. To win the war, William Pitt had spent vast sums of money, leaving the new king with an enormous war debt. English taxpayers, who had groaned under the wartime burden, now demanded tax relief, not tax increases. Second, the new Canadian territory posed serious governance problems because the Indians were unwilling to pledge their allegiance to the English king and, despite the change in flag, the French Canadians were unwilling to abandon their traditions, laws, or the Catholic Church.

### Dealing with Indian and French Canadian Resistance

Both the Canadian tribes and Spain's former Indian allies along the southeastern borders of the English colonies felt threatened by Britain's victory. For decades, Indian diplomats had protected their lands by playing European rivals against one another, but with the elimination of France and the weakening of Spain in mainland America, this strategy was impossible. This situation united the Indians, who acted quickly to create an intertribal alliance known as the **Covenant Chain**. The Covenant Chain brought together Senecas, Ojibwas, Potowatomis, Hurons, Ottawas, Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes, all of whom stood ready to resist colonial settlers, British trading policy, and the terms of military occupation of frontier forts. Led by the Ottawa chief **Pontiac**, the Indians mounted their attack on British forts and colonial settlements in the spring of 1763. By fall, their resistance had evaporated, and the Covenant Chain tribes were forced to acknowledge British control of the Ohio Valley.

The British realized, however, that as long as the “middle ground” between Indian and colonial populations continued to shrink, Indians would mount such resistance. And as long as Indians resisted what Creeks bluntly called “people greedily grasping after the lands of red people,” settlers would demand expensive military protection as they pushed westward. Grenville’s solution was a proclamation, issued in 1763, temporarily banning all colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Grenville’s **Proclamation Line of 1763** outraged colonists who were hoping to move west, and wealthy land speculators hoping to reap a profit from their western investments. With the Indian enemy reeling from defeat, settlers insisted that this was the perfect moment to cross the mountains and stake claims to the land. Most colonists simply ignored Grenville’s Proclamation Line. Over the next decade, areas such as Kentucky began to fill with eager homesteaders, creating a wedge that divided northern Indian tribes from southern tribes and increasing Indian anxiety (see Map 5.1).

Because of their long tradition of anti-Catholic sentiment, American colonists also objected to Grenville’s policy toward French-speaking Catholic Canadians. George III’s advisers preferred to win over these new subjects rather than strong-arm them. To balance the French Canadians’ loss of their fishing and fur-trading industries, Grenville promised them the right to preserve their religious and cultural ways of life. Britain’s colonists were scandalized by this concession to the losers in the war.

### Demanding More from the Colonists

Colonists were not the only ones growing discontent. In London, the king, his ministers, and many members of Parliament were impatient with colonial behavior and attitudes. Had not the colonists benefited more than anyone from the French defeat? asked George Grenville. Such questions revealed the subtle but important

**Covenant Chain** An alliance of Indian tribes established to resist colonial settlement in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region and to oppose British trading policies.

**Pontiac** Ottawa chief who led the unsuccessful resistance against British policy in 1763.

### Proclamation Line of 1763

Boundary that Britain established in the Appalachian Mountains, west of which white settlement was banned; it was intended to reduce conflict between Indians and colonists.

rewriting of the motives and goals of the French and Indian War. Although Britain had waged the war to win dominance in European affairs, not to benefit the colonies, Grenville now declared that the war had been fought to protect the colonists and to expand their opportunities for settlement.

This new interpretation fit well with the government's increasing doubts about colonial commitments to the Empire's trade interests. It seemed clear to Grenville that something had gone wrong in the economic relationship between England and the colonies. Colonial cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York had grown considerably, yet their growth did not make England as rich as **mercantile theory** said it should. One reason was that in every colony, locally produced goods competed with English-made goods. A more important reason, however, was illegal trade. Colonists seized economic opportunity wherever they found it—even in trade with England's wartime rivals. In peacetime, colonists avoided paying **import duties** on foreign goods by bribing customs officials or landing cargoes where no customs officers were stationed.

George Grenville was often mocked for having a bookkeeper's mentality, but few laughed at what the prime minister discovered when he examined the imperial trade books. By the 1760s, the Crown had collected less than £2,000 in revenue from colonial trade with other nations while the cost of collecting these duties was over £7,000 a year. Such discoveries fueled British suspicions that the colonies were underregulated and undergoverned, as well as ungrateful and uncooperative. Amid the strong doubts about colonial loyalty and the reality of the British government debts and soaring expenses, Parliament approved reforms of colonial policy proposed by Grenville in 1764. Colonists greeted those reforms with shock and alarm.

Separately, each of Grenville's measures addressed a loophole in the proper relationship between the Mother Country and colonies. For example, a **Currency Act** outlawed the use of paper money as legal tender in the colonies. In part, this was done to ensure the colonial market for English manufacturers. Although the colonists had to pay for imported English products with hard currency (gold and silver), they could use paper money to pay for locally produced goods. With paper money now banned, local manufacturers would be driven out of business.

Grenville believed the major problem was smuggling. Lawbreakers were so common, and customs officers so easily bribed, that smuggling had become an acceptable, even respectable, form of commerce. To halt this illicit traffic, Grenville set about to reform the **customs service**. In his 1764 American Revenue Act, he increased the powers of the customs officers, allowing them to use blanket warrants, called writs of assistance, to search ships and warehouses for smuggled goods. He also changed the regulations regarding key foreign imports, including sugar, wine, and coffee. This startling shift in policy, known popularly as the **Sugar Act**, revealed Grenville's practical bent. He decided to make a profit for the Crown from this trade. He would lower the tax on imported sugar—but he would make sure it was collected. Until 1764, a colonist accused of smuggling was tried before a jury of his neighbors in a **civil court**. Grenville now declared that anyone caught smuggling would be tried in a juryless **vice-admiralty court**, where a conviction was likely. Once smuggling became too costly and too risky, Grenville reasoned, American shippers would declare their cargoes of French sugar and pay the Crown for the privilege of importing them.

### The Colonial Response

Grenville's reforms were spectacularly ill timed as far as Americans were concerned. The colonial economy was suffering from a postwar **depression**, brought on in part by the loss of the British army as a steady market for American supplies and of British soldiers as steady customers who paid in hard currency. In 1764, unemployment

**mercantile theory** The economic notion that a nation should amass wealth by exporting more than it imports; colonies are valuable in a mercantile system as a source of raw materials and as a market for manufactured goods.

**import duties** Taxes on imported goods.

**Currency Act** British law of 1764 banning the printing of paper money in the American colonies.

**customs service** A government agency authorized to collect taxes on foreign goods entering a country.

**Sugar Act** British law of 1764 that taxed sugar and other colonial imports to pay for some of Britain's expenses in protecting the colonies.

**civil court** Any court that hears cases regarding the rights of private citizens.

**vice-admiralty court** Nonjury British court in which a judge heard cases involving shipping.

**depression** A period of drastic economic decline, marked by decreased business activity, falling prices, and high unemployment.

was high among urban artisans, dockworkers, and sailors. Colonial merchants were caught in a credit squeeze, unable to pay their debts to British merchants because their colonial customers had no cash to pay for their purchases. These colonists were not likely to cheer a currency act that shut off a source of money or a Sugar Act that established a new get-tough policy on foreign trade. In the eyes of many colonists, the English government was turning into a greater menace than the French army had ever been.

Proposals for action soon filled the pages of colonial newspapers. This concern suggested that Grenville's reforms had raised profound issues of liberty and the rights of citizens and of the relationship between Parliament and the colonial governments—issues that needed to be resolved. The degree to which Parliament had, or ought to have, power over colonial economic and political life required serious, public pondering. Years later, Massachusetts lawyer and revolutionary John Adams stressed the importance of the Sugar Act in starting America down the road to independence. “I know not why we should blush to confess,” wrote Adams, “that molasses [liquid sugar] was an essential ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes.” But in 1764 colonists were far from agreement over the issue of parliamentary and local political powers. They were not even certain how to respond to the Sugar Act.

### The Stamp Act

Grenville was hardly a stranger to protest and anger—he had often heard British citizens grumble about taxes and assert their rights against the government. As he saw it, his duty was to fill the treasury, reduce the nation’s staggering debt, arm

its troops, and keep the royal navy afloat. The duty of loyal British citizens was to obey the laws of their sovereign government. Grenville had no doubt that the measures he and Parliament were taking to regulate the colonies and their revenue-producing trade were constitutional. Some colonists, however, had doubts. Thus the next piece of colonial legislation Grenville proposed was designed not only to raise revenue but to settle the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.

**Stamp Act** British law of 1765 that directly taxed a variety of items, including newspapers, playing cards, and legal documents.

**direct tax** A tax imposed to raise revenue rather than to regulate trade.

**external taxation** Revenue raised in the course of regulating trade with other nations.

The **Stamp Act** of 1765 was to be the first **direct tax** ever laid on the colonies by Parliament, and its purpose was to raise revenue by taxing certain goods and services. There was nothing startling or novel about the revenue-collecting method Grenville proposed. A stamp tax raised money by requiring the use of government “stamped paper” on certain goods or as part of the cost for certain services. It was simple and efficient, and several colonial legislatures had already adopted this method. What was startling, however, was that Parliament would consider imposing a tax on the colonists that was not aimed at regulation of foreign trade. Up until 1765, Parliament had passed many acts regulating colonial trade. These regulations on imports generated revenue for the Crown, and the colonists accepted them as a form of **external taxation**. But colonists expected direct taxation only from their local assemblies. If Grenville’s Stamp Act became law, it would mark a radical change in the distribution of political power between assemblies and Parliament. It would be the powerful assertion of Parliament’s sovereignty that Grenville intended.

Most members of Parliament saw the Stamp Act as an efficient and modest redistribution of the burdens of the empire—and a constitutional one. Colonists were certainly not being asked to shoulder the entire burden, since the estimated £160,000 in revenue from the stamped paper would cover only one-fifth of the cost of maintaining a British army in North America. Under these circumstances, Parliament saw no reason to deny Grenville’s proposed tax. The Stamp Act passed in February 1765 and was set to go into effect in November. News of the tax crossed the ocean rapidly and was greeted with

outrage and anger. Opposition was widespread among the colonists because virtually every free man and woman was affected by a tax that required stamps on all legal documents, newspapers, and pamphlets.

### The Popular Response

Many colonists were ready to resist the new legislation. Massachusetts, whose smugglers were already choking on the new customs regulations, and whose assembly had a long history of struggle with local Crown officers, led the way.

During the summer of 1765, a group of Bostonians formed a secret resistance organization called the **Sons of Liberty**. Spearheading the Sons was the irrepressible **Samuel Adams**, a Harvard-educated member of a prominent Massachusetts family who preferred the company of local working men and women to the conversation of the elite. More at home in the dockside taverns than in the comfortable parlors of his relatives, Adams was a quick-witted, dynamic champion of working-class causes. He had a genius for writing propaganda and for mobilizing popular sentiment on political and community issues. Most members of the Sons of Liberty were artisans and shopkeepers, and the group's main support came from men of the city's laboring classes who had been hard hit by the postwar depression and would suffer from the stamp tax. These colonists had little influence in the legislature or with Crown officials, but they compensated by staging public demonstrations and protests to make their opinions known.

Demonstrations and protests escalated, and once again Boston led the way. On August 14, shoemaker Ebenezer McIntosh led a crowd to protest the appointment of the colony's stamp agent, wealthy merchant Andrew Oliver. Until recently, McIntosh had headed one of two major workers' organizations in town—a group of artisans, apprentices, and day laborers known to the city's disapproving elite as the South End "gang." But on this August day, city gentlemen disguised themselves as workingmen and joined McIntosh's gang members as they paraded through the city streets, carrying an effigy of Oliver. The crowd destroyed the stamp agent's dockside warehouse and later broke all the windows in his home. The message was clear—and Oliver understood it well. The following day Andrew Oliver resigned as stamp agent. Boston Sons of Liberty celebrated by declaring the tree on which they hanged Oliver's effigy the "liberty tree."

Oliver's resignation did not end the protest. Customs officers and other Crown officials living in Boston were threatened with words and worse. The chief target of abuse, however, was the haughty merchant **Thomas Hutchinson**, hated by many of the ambitious younger political leaders because he monopolized appointive offices in the colony's government, and by the workingmen because of his obvious disdain for ordinary people. Late one August evening, a large crowd surrounded Hutchinson's elegant brick mansion. Warned of the impending attack, Hutchinson and his family had wisely fled, escaping just before rocks began to shatter the parlor windows. By dawn, the house was in ruins, and Hutchinson's furniture, clothing, and personal library had been trashed.

The campaign against the stamp agents spread like a brushfire across the colonies. Agents in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, and New York were mercilessly harassed. Most stamp agents resigned. Colonial governors retaliated by refusing to allow any colonial ships to leave port. They hoped this disruption of trade would persuade local merchants to help end the resistance. Their strategy backfired. Violence increased as hundreds of unemployed sailors took to the streets, terrorizing customs officers and any colonists suspected of supporting the king's taxation policy.

**Sons of Liberty** A secret organization first formed in Boston to oppose the Stamp Act.

**Samuel Adams** Massachusetts revolutionary leader and propagandist who organized opposition to British policies after 1764.

**Thomas Hutchinson** Boston merchant and judge who served as lieutenant governor and later governor of Massachusetts; Stamp Act protesters destroyed his home in 1765.

**Patrick Henry** Member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and American revolutionary leader noted for his oratorical skills.

### Political Debate

While the Sons of Liberty and their supporters demonstrated in the streets, most colonial political leaders were proceeding with caution. Virginia lawyer and planter **Patrick Henry** briefly stirred the passions of his colleagues in the House of

Burgesses when he suggested that the Stamp Act was evidence of the king's tyranny. Not everyone agreed with him that the measure was so serious. Many did agree, however, that the heart of the matter was not stamped paper but parliamentary sovereignty versus the rights of colonial citizens. "No taxation without representation"—the principle that citizens cannot be taxed by a government unless they are represented in it—was a fundamental assumption of free white Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic. The crucial question was, Did the House of Commons represent the colonists even though no colonist sat in the House and none voted for its members? If the answer was no, then the Stamp Act violated the colonists' most basic "rights of Englishmen."

Stating the issue in this way led to other concerns. Could colonial political leaders oppose a single law such as the Stamp Act without completely denying the authority of the government that was responsible for its passage? Massachusetts lawyer James Otis pondered this question when he sat down to write his *Rights of the British Colonists Asserted and Proved*. Any opposition to the Stamp Act, he decided, was ultimately a challenge to parliamentary authority over the colonies, and it would surely lead to colonial rebellion and a declaration of colonial independence. He, for one, was not prepared to become a rebel.

The logic of his own argument disturbed Otis and prompted him to propose a compromise: the colonists should be given representation in the House of Commons. Few political leaders took this suggestion seriously. Even if Parliament agreed, a small

When Parliament enacted the Stamp Tax of 1765, the government designed this special embossed tax stamp to be used on the items that came under the new law. These items included newspapers, most legal documents, playing cards, and dice. The Stamp Tax provoked the first major protest and boycott by colonists against the Mother Country. The Granger Collection, New York.



contingent of colonists could be easily ignored in its decision making. Most colonial leaders thought it best to declare that American rights and liberties were under attack and to issue warnings that the assemblies would oppose any further threats to colonial rights. They carefully avoided, however, any treasonous statements or threats of rebellion. In the most popular pamphlet of 1765, Pennsylvania lawyer Daniel Dulaney captured this combination of criticism and caution. His *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes on the British Colonies* reaffirmed the dependence of the colonies on Great Britain. But it also reminded Parliament that Americans knew the difference between dependence and slavery.

Grenville's policies appeared to be bringing about what had once seemed impossible: united political action by the colonies. Until the Stamp Act, competition among the colonial governments was far more common than cooperation. Yet, in the fall of 1765 delegates from nine colonies met in New York "to consider a general and unified, dutiful, loyal and humble Representation [petition]" to the king and Parliament. The petitions this historic Stamp Act Congress ultimately produced were far bolder than the delegates first intended. They were powerful, tightly argued statements that conceded parliamentary authority over the colonies but denied Parliament's right to impose any direct taxes on them. "No taxes," the Congress said, "ever have been, or can be Constitutionally imposed" on the colonies "but by their respective Legislatures." Clearly Americans expected this tradition to be honored.

### Repeal of the Stamp Act

Neither the protest in the streets nor the arguments of the Stamp Act Congress moved the king or Parliament to repeal the stamp tax. But economic pressure did. English manufacturers relied heavily on their colonial markets and were cer-

tain to be hurt by any interruption in the flow and sale of goods to America. The most powerful weapon in the colonial arsenal was a refusal to purchase English goods. On Halloween night, just one day before the stamp tax went into effect, two hundred New York merchants announced that they would not import any new British goods. Local artisans rallied to support this **boycott**. A mixture of patriotism and self-interest motivated both groups. The merchants saw the possibility of emptying warehouses bulging with unsold goods because of the postwar depression. Underemployed artisans saw the chance to sell their own products if the supply of cheaper English-made goods dried up. The same combination of interests existed in other colonial cities, and thus the nonimportation movement spread quickly. By the end of November, several colonial assemblies had publicly endorsed the nonimportation agreements signed by local merchants.

English exporters complained bitterly of the damage done to their businesses and pressured Parliament to take colonial protest seriously. Talk of repeal grew bolder and louder in the halls of Parliament. The Grenville government reluctantly conceded that enforcement of the Stamp Act had failed miserably. Even in colonies where royal officials dared to distribute the stamped paper, Americans refused to purchase it. Colonists simply ignored the hated law and continued to sue their neighbors, sell their land, publish their newspapers, and buy their playing cards as if the stamped paper and the Stamp Act did not exist.

By winter's end, Grenville was no longer prime minister. For the king's new head of state, Lord Rockingham, the critical issue was not whether to repeal the Stamp Act but how to do so without appearing to cave in to colonial pressure. After much debate and political maneuvering, Great Britain repealed the Stamp Act in 1766 but at the same time passed a Declaratory Act, which asserted that the colonies "have been, are, and of

**boycott** An organized political protest in which people refuse to buy goods from a nation or group of people whose actions they oppose.

right ought to be subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial Crown and parliament of Great Britain.” Parliament’s right to pass legislation for and raise taxes from the North American colonies was reaffirmed as absolute.

## Asserting American Rights

★ **Why did Charles Townshend expect his revenue-raising measures to be successful?**

★ **What were the results of colonial resistance?**

The Declaratory Act firmly asserted that Parliament had “the sole and exclusive right” to tax the colonists. This was a clear rejection of the colonial assemblies’ claim to power, yet the colonists responded with indifference. Those who commented on it at all dismissed it as a face-saving device. To a degree, they were correct. But the Declaratory Act expressed the views of powerful men in Parliament, and within a year they put it to the test.

By the summer of 1766, William Pitt had returned to power within George III’s government. But Pitt was old and preoccupied with his failing health. He lacked the energy to exercise the control over the government he had demonstrated during the French and Indian War. The young Charles Townshend, serving as chancellor of the exchequer, rushed in to fill the leadership void. This brash politician wasted little time foisting a new package of taxes on the colonies.

### The Townshend Acts and Colonial Protest

During the Stamp Act crisis, Benjamin Franklin had assured Parliament that American colonists accepted indirect taxation even if they violently protested a direct tax such as the Stamp Act. In other words, Americans conceded the British government’s right to any revenue arising from the regulation of colonial trade. In 1767 Townshend decided to test this distinction by proposing new regulations on a variety of imported necessities. But the Townshend Acts were import taxes unlike any other the colonies had ever seen: they were tariffs on products made in Britain.

The Townshend Acts taxed glass, paper, paint, and lead products made in England, all part of the luxury trade. The acts also placed a three-penny tax on tea, the most popular drink among colonists everywhere. Townshend wanted to be certain these taxes were collected, so he ordered new customs boards established in the colonies and created new vice-admiralty courts in the major port cities of Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia to try any cases of smuggling or tax evasion that might occur. In case Americans tried to harass customs officials, as they had so effectively done during the stamp tax protests, Townshend ordered British troops transferred from the western regions to the major colonial port cities. He knew this troop relocation would anger the colonists, but he was relying on the presence of uniformed soldiers—known as “redcoats” because of their scarlet jackets—to keep the peace. To help finance this military occupation of key cities, Townshend invoked the 1766 Quartering Act, a law requiring colonists to provide room and board to troops stationed in their midst.

Clearly, Townshend was taking every precaution to avoid the embarrassment Grenville had suffered in the Stamp Act disaster. But he made a serious error in believing that colonists would meekly agree to pay import duties on British-made goods. When news of the new regulations reached the colonies, the response was immediate, determined, and well-organized resistance.

The colonists were united in their opposition to the Townshend Acts and to Britain’s repressive enforcement policies. Some were incensed that the government was once again

trampling on the principle of “no taxation without representation.” In Boston, many worried more about the economic burden of the new taxes and the quartering of the troops than about political rights. But John Dickinson, a well-respected Pennsylvania landowner and lawyer, laid out the basic American position on imperial relations in his pamphlet *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767). Direct taxation without representation violated the colonists’ rights as English citizens, Dickinson declared. But by imposing any tax that did not regulate foreign trade, Parliament also violated those rights. Dickinson also considered, and rejected, the British claim that Americans were represented in the House of Commons. According to the British argument, colonists enjoyed “virtual representation” because the House of Commons represented the interests of all citizens in the Empire who were not members of the nobility, whether those citizens participated directly in elections to the House or not. Like most Americans, Dickinson discounted virtual representation. What Englishmen were entitled to, he wrote, was *actual* representation by men they had elected to government to protect their interests. For qualified voters in the colonies, who enjoyed actual representation in their local assemblies, virtual representation was nothing more than a weak excuse for exclusion and exploitation.

While political theorists set out the American position in newspaper essays and pamphlets, protest leaders organized popular resistance against acts that were clearly designed to raise revenue as well as make daily life more expensive in the colonies. Samuel Adams set in motion a massive boycott of British goods to begin on January 1, 1768. Just as before, some welcomed the chance a boycott provided to “mow down luxury and high living.” But simple economics also contributed to the boycott. Boston artisans remained enthusiastic about any action that stopped the flow of inexpensive English-made goods to America. Small-scale merchants were also eager to see nonimportation enforced. They had little access to British credit or goods under normal circumstances, and the boycott would eliminate the advantages enjoyed by the merchant elite who did. Shippers who made their living smuggling goods from the West Indies supported the boycott because it cut out the competing English-made products. The large-scale merchants who had led the 1765 boycott were not enthusiastic, however. By 1767, their warehouses were no longer overflowing with unsold English stock, and the boycott might cut off their livelihoods. Many of these elite merchants delayed signing the agreements.

Just as the Sons of Liberty and the Stamp Act demonstrations brought common men into the political arena, the 1768 boycott brought politics into the lives of women. When in 1765 the inexpensive, factory-made cloth produced in England had been placed on the list of boycotted goods, a neglected domestic skill became a symbolic element in the American protest strategy. Taking a bold political stance, many women, including wealthy mothers and daughters, formed groups called the Daughters of Liberty and staged large public spinning bees to show support for the boycott. Wearing clothing made of “homespun” became a mark of honor and a political statement. As one male observer noted, “The ladies . . . while they vie with each other in skill and industry in their profitable employment, may vie with the men in contributing to the preservation and prosperity of their country and equally share in the honor of it.” Through the boycott, politics had entered the domestic circle.

### The British Humiliated

Townshend and his new taxation policy faced sustained defiance in almost every colony, but Massachusetts provided the greatest embarrassment for Parliament. Massachusetts governor Francis Bernard had lost his control over local politics ever since he tried to punish the assembly for issuing a call in 1768 for collective protest, called a Circular Letter, against the Townshend Acts to other colonies. Although Bernard forced the assembly to rescind the letter, the men chosen for the legislature in the next

election simply reissued it. The helpless governor could do nothing to save face except dismiss the assembly, leaving the colony without any representative government. Bernard's ability to ensure law and order eroded rapidly after this. Enforcers of the boycott roamed the streets of Boston, intimidating pro-British merchants and harassing anyone wearing British-made clothing. Boston mobs openly threatened customs officials, and the Sons of Liberty protected thriving smuggling operations. Despite the increased number of customs officers policing the docks and wharves, the colony did a thriving business in smuggling foreign goods and the items listed in the hated Townshend Acts. One of the town's most notorious smugglers, the flamboyant John Hancock, grew more popular with his neighbors each time he broke the customs laws and unloaded his illegal cargoes of Spanish wines or French West Indian sugar. When customs officers seized Hancock's vessel, aptly named the *Liberty*, in June 1768, protesters beat customs men, and mobs visited the homes of other royal officials. The now-desperate Governor Bernard sent an urgent plea for help to the British government.

In October 1768, four thousand troops arrived in Boston. The Crown clearly believed that the presence of one soldier for every four citizens would be enough to restore order quickly. John Adams marveled at what he considered British thick-headedness. The presence of so many young soldiers, far from home and surrounded by a hostile community, was certain to worsen the situation. Military occupation of Boston made more violence inevitable. The soldiers angered local dockworkers by moonlighting in the shipyards when off duty and taking jobs away from colonists by accepting lower pay. For their part, civilians taunted the sentries, insulted the soldiers, and refused the military any sign of hospitality. News of street-corner fights and tavern brawls inflamed feelings on both sides. Samuel Adams and his friends did their best to fan the flames of hatred, publishing daily accounts of both real and imaginary confrontations in which soldiers threatened the honor of innocent townspeople.

The military occupation dragged on through 1769 and early 1770. On March 5, the major confrontation most people expected occurred. An angry crowd began throwing snowballs and ice at British sentries guarding the customs house. The redcoats, under strict orders not to fire on civilians, issued a frantic call for help in withdrawing to safety. When Captain Thomas Preston and his men arrived to rescue the sentries, the growing crowd immediately enveloped them. How, and under whose orders, Preston's soldiers began to fire is unknown, but they killed five men and wounded eight others. Four of the five victims were white laborers. The fifth, Crispus Attucks, was a runaway slave.

Even before the bloodshed of March 5, Edmund Burke, a member of Parliament known for his sympathy to the colonial cause, had warned the House of Commons that the relationship between Mother Country and colonies was desperate. "The Americans," Burke said, "have made a discovery, or think they have made one, that we mean to oppress them; we have made a discovery, or think we have made one, that they intend to rise in rebellion. We do not know how to advance; they do not know how to retreat." Burke captured well the growing American conviction of a conspiracy or plot by Parliament to deprive the colonists of their rights and liberties. He also captured the British government's growing sense that a rebellion was being hatched. But Parliament was ready to act to ease the crisis and make a truce possible. A new minister, Frederick Lord North, was given the reins of government, and on the very day Preston's men fired on the crowd at Boston, North repealed the Townshend Acts and allowed the hated Quartering Act to expire. Yet North gave no ground on the question of parliamentary control of the colonies. For this reason, North kept the tax on tea—to preserve a principle rather than fill the king's treasury.



Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre appeared in newspapers the day after the confrontation between redcoats and Boston citizens. Even though Preston and most of his soldiers were acquitted of wrongdoing, Revere's striking image of innocent civilians and murderous soldiers remained fixed in the popular mind.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. [LC-USZC2-4913].

Repeal of the Townshend Acts allowed the colonists to return to the ordinary routine of their lives. But it was not true that all tensions had vanished. The economic boycott begun in 1768 exposed and deepened the growing divisions between the merchant elite and the coalition of smaller merchants, artisans, and laborers in the urban centers of the North. During the years of nonimportation, many of the wealthy merchants had secretly imported and sold British goods whenever possible. When repeal came in 1770, the demand for locally manufactured goods was still low, and artisans and laborers continued to face poor economic prospects. These groups were reluctant to abandon the boycott even after repeal. But few merchants, large or small, would agree to continue it.

## The Crisis Renewed

- ★ **What British policies led Americans to imagine a plot against their rights and liberties?**
- ★ **How did the Continental Congress respond to the Intolerable Acts?**

Lord North's government took care not to disturb the calm created by the repeal of the Townshend Acts. Between 1770 and 1773, North proposed no new taxes on the colonists and made no major changes in colonial policy. American political leaders took equal care not to make any open challenges to British authority. Both sides recognized that their political truce had its limits. It did not extend to smugglers and customs men, who continued to lock horns; nor did it end the bitterness of southern colonists who wished to settle beyond the Proclamation Line.

### Disturbing the Peace of the Early 1770s

Despite the repeal of the Townshend duties, the British effort to crack down on American smuggling continued. New England merchants whose fortunes were built on trade with the Caribbean resented the sight of customs officers at the

docks and customs ships patrolling the coastline. Rhode Island merchants were especially angry and frustrated by the determined customs operation in their colony. They took their revenge one June day in 1772 when the customs patrol boat, the *Gaspée*, ran aground as it chased an American vessel. That evening a band of colonists boarded the *Gaspée* and set it afire.

Rhode Islanders called the burning of the *Gaspée* an act of political resistance. The English called it an act of vandalism and appointed a royal commission to investigate. To their amazement, no witnesses came forward, and no evidence could be gathered to support any arrests. The British found the conspiracy of silence among the Rhode Islanders appalling.

Many American political leaders found the royal commission equally appalling. They were convinced that the British government had intended to bring its suspects to England for trial and deprive them of a jury of their peers. They read this as further evidence of the plot to destroy American liberty, and they decided to keep in close contact to monitor British moves. Following the Virginia assembly's lead, five colonies organized a communications network called the committees of correspondence, instructing each committee to circulate detailed accounts of any questionable royal activities in its colony. These committees of correspondence were also a good mechanism for coordinating protest or resistance should the need arise. Thus the colonists put in place their first permanent machinery of protest.

### The Tea Act and the Tea Party

During the early 1770s, colonial activists worked to keep the political consciousness of the 1760s alive. But without major British provocation, a revival of mass action was unlikely. Then in 1773 Parliament provided that provocation.

This time the government was not setting new colonial policy. It was trying to save a major commercial enterprise, the East India Tea Company. Mismanagement, coupled with the American boycott and the tendency of colonists to buy smuggled Dutch tea, had left the company in serious financial trouble. With its warehouses bursting with unsold tea, the company appealed to Parliament to rescue them.

The company directors had a plan: If Parliament allowed them to ship their tea directly to the colonial market, eliminating the English merchants who served as middlemen, they could lower their prices and compete against the smuggled Dutch tea. Even with the three-penny tax on tea that remained from the Townshend era, smart consumers would see this as a bargain. Lord North liked the plan and saw in it the opportunity for vindication: Americans who purchased the cheaper English tea would be confirming Parliament's right to tax the colonies. With little debate, Parliament made the company's arrangement legal through passage of the Tea Act.

Once again, British politicians had seriously misjudged the impact of their decisions. Colonists read the Tea Act as an insult, another chilling sign of a conspiracy against their well-being and their liberty. They distrusted the arrangement, believing that the East India Tea Company would raise its prices dramatically once all foreign teas were driven from the market. They were concerned that if other British companies marketing products in the colonies followed the East India Tea Company's example, prices for scores of products would soar. These objections, however, paled beside the colonists' immediate grasp of Lord North's strategy: purchasing cheaper English tea would confirm Parliament's right to tax the colonies.

Colonists mobilized their resistance in 1773 with the skill acquired from a decade of experience. In several cities, crowds met the ships carrying the East India tea and used

the threat of violence to persuade ship captains to return to England with the tea still on board. As long as both the captains and the local royal officials gave in to these pressures, no serious confrontation occurred. But in Massachusetts, the most famous victim of mob violence, now Governor Thomas Hutchinson, was not willing to give in. There colonists refused to allow crews to unload the tea, but Hutchinson refused to allow the tea ships to depart without unloading. Boston activists broke the stalemate on December 16, 1773, when some sixty men, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded the tea ships. Working calmly, they dumped 342 chests of tea, worth almost £10,000, into the waters of Boston Harbor.

### The Intolerable Acts

The tea chests had barely settled into the harbor mud before Parliament retaliated. The king and his minister meant to make an example of everyone in Boston, the source of so much trouble and embarrassment over the past decade. The four acts that Parliament passed in 1774 to discipline Massachusetts were harsh and uncompromising. The colonists called them the Intolerable Acts. The Port Act declared the port of Boston closed to all trade until the citizens compensated the East India Tea Company fully for its losses. This was a devastating blow to the colony's economy. The Massachusetts Government Act transferred much of the power of the colony's assembly to the royal governor, including the right to appoint judges, sheriffs, and members of the colonial legislature's upper house. The colony's town meetings, which had served as forums for anti-British sentiment and protests, also came under the governor's direct control. A third measure, the Justice Act, allowed royal officials charged with capital crimes to stand trial in London rather than before local juries. And a new Quartering Act gave military commanders the authority to house troops in private homes. To see that these laws were enforced, the king named General Thomas Gage, commander of the British troops in North America, as the acting governor of Massachusetts.

The king expected the severe punishment of Massachusetts to isolate that colony from its neighbors. But the Americans resisted this divide-and-conquer strategy. In every colony, newspaper essays and editorials urged readers to see Boston's plight as their own. "This horrid attack upon the town of Boston," said the *South Carolina Gazette*, "we consider not as an attempt upon that town singly, but upon the whole Continent." In pamphlets and political essays, colonists placed these acts into the larger context of systematic oppression by the Mother Country. Political writers referred to the British government as the "enemy," conspiring to deprive Americans of their liberty, and urged colonists to defend themselves against the "power and cunning of our adversaries." This unity of sentiments, however, was more fragile than it appeared. In the cities, bitter divisions developed, and artisans struggled with merchants to control the mass meetings that would make strategy choices. Samuel Adams and the radical artisans of Boston formed a "solemn league and covenant" to lead a third intercolonial boycott of British goods, a move that they knew could lead to armed rebellion. Yet even in crisis-torn Boston, not everyone wanted matters to go that far.

### Creating a National Forum: The First Continental Congress

On September 5, 1774, delegates from every colony but distant Georgia gathered in Philadelphia for a continental congress. Few of the delegates or the people they represented thought of themselves as revolutionaries. "We want no revolution," a North Carolina delegate bluntly stated. Yet in the eyes of their British rulers, he and other colonists were treading dangerously close to treason. After all, neither the

king nor Parliament had authorized the congress to which colonial assemblies and self-appointed committees had sent representatives. And that congress was intent on resisting acts of Parliament and defying the king. English men and women had been hanged as traitors for far less serious betrayals of the English government.

The mounting crisis in Massachusetts diminished the chances of any moderate solution. Rumors spread that the royal navy was planning to bombard Boston and that General Gage was preparing to invade the countryside. Thousands of Massachusetts militiamen had begun mustering in Cambridge. The growing conflict drove many delegates into the radical camp. In this atmosphere of dread and anxiety, the Continental Congress approved the Continental Association, a boycott of all English goods to begin on December 1, 1774. The Congress also passed strong resolutions demanding the repeal of the Intolerable Acts.

If no compromise could be reached, the delegates—and Americans everywhere—would have to choose where their strongest loyalties lay. Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania believed that he had worked out the necessary compromise. In his Plan of Union, Galloway proposed a drastic restructuring of imperial relations. The plan called for a Grand Council, elected by each colonial legislature, that would share with Parliament the right to originate laws for the colonies. The Grand Council and Parliament would have the power to veto each other's decisions if necessary. A governor-general, appointed by the Crown, would oversee council operations and preserve imperial interests.

After much discussion and debate, Congress rejected Galloway's compromise by the narrowest of margins. Then it was John Adams's turn to propose a solution. Under his skillful urging and direction, the Congress adopted the Declaration of Rights and Grievances. The declaration politely but firmly established the colonial standard for acceptable legislation by Parliament. Colonists, said the declaration, would consent to acts meant to regulate “our external commerce.” But they absolutely denied the legitimacy, or lawfulness, of an “idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects of America, without their consent.”

The delegates knew that the force behind the declaration came neither from the logic of its argument nor from the genius of its political reasoning. Whatever force it carried came from the unspoken, but nevertheless real, threat that rebellion would occur if the colonists' demands were not met. To make this threat clearer, Congress endorsed a set of resolutions rushed to Philadelphia from Suffolk County, Massachusetts. These Suffolk Resolves called on the residents of that county to arm themselves and prepare to resist British military action. Congressional support for these resolves sent an unmistakable message that American leaders were willing to choose rebellion if politics failed.

The delegates adjourned and headed home, bringing news of the Congress's decisions with them to their families and their communities. There was nothing to do now but wait for the Crown's response. When it came, it was electric. “Blows must decide,” declared King George III, “whether they are to be subject to this country or independent.”

## The Decision for Independence

- ★ Could the Revolutionary War have been avoided?
- ★ What motivated some colonists to become loyalists and others to become patriots?

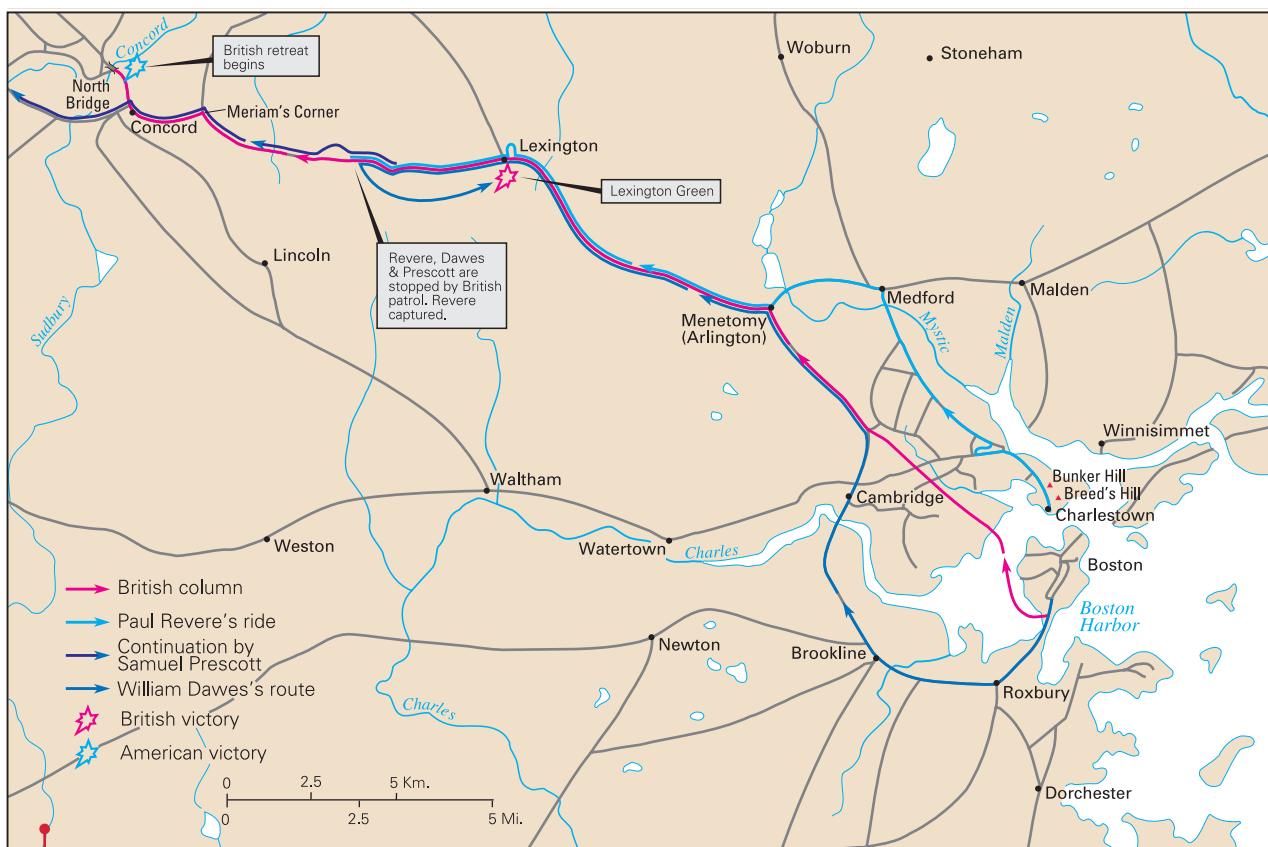
Americans were anxious while they waited for the king and Parliament to respond to the Declaration of Rights and Grievances, but they were not idle. In most colonies, a transfer of political power was occurring as the majority of Americans withdrew their support for

and obedience to royal governments and recognized the authority of anti-British, patriot governments. The king might expect blows to decide the issue of colonial autonomy, but independent local governments were becoming a reality before any shots were fired.

### Taking Charge and Enforcing Policies

Imperial control broke down as communities in each colony refused to obey royal laws or acknowledge the authority of royal officers. For example, when General Gage, the acting governor of Massachusetts, refused to convene the Massachusetts assembly, its members met anyway. Their first order of business was to prepare for military resistance to Gage and his army. While the redcoats occupied Boston, the rebellious assembly openly ordered the colonists to stockpile military supplies near the town of Concord (see Map 5.2).

The transition from royal to patriot political control was peaceful in communities where anti-British sentiment was strong. Where it was weak, or where the community was divided, radicals used persuasion, pressure, and open intimidation to advance the patriot cause. These radicals became increasingly impatient with dissent, disagreement, or even indecision among their neighbors. They insisted that people choose sides and declare loyalties.



**MAP 5.2** The First Battles in the War for Independence, 1775

This map shows the British march to Concord and the routes taken by the three Americans who alerted the countryside of the enemy's approach. Although Paul Revere was captured by the British and did not complete his ride, he is the best remembered and most celebrated of the nightriders who spread the alarm.

**loyalist** An American colonist who remained loyal to the king during the Revolution.

In most colonial cities and towns, patriot committees arose to enforce compliance with the boycott of British goods. These committees publicly exposed those who did not obey the Continental Association, publishing violators' names in local newspapers and calling on the community to shun them. When public shaming did not work, most committees were ready to use threats of physical violence and to make good on them. In New England, many pro-British citizens, or **loyalists**, came to fear for their lives. In the wake of the Intolerable Acts, hundreds of them fled to the city of Boston, hoping General Gage could protect them from their neighbors.

### The Shot Heard 'Round the World

The American situation was frustrating, but King George continued to believe that resistance in most colonies would fade if the Massachusetts radicals were crushed. In January

1775, he ordered General Gage to arrest the most notorious leaders of rebellion in that colony, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. Although storms on the Atlantic prevented the king's orders from reaching Gage until April, the general had independently decided it was time to take action. Gage planned to dispatch a force of redcoats to Concord with orders to seize the rapidly growing stockpile of weapons and arrest the two radical leaders along the way.

The patriots, of course, had their spies in Boston. The only question was when and where Gage would attack. The Americans devised a warning system: as soon as Gage's troops began to move out of Boston, spies would signal the route with lanterns hung in the bell tower of the North Church. On April 18, 1775, riders waiting outside Boston saw one lantern, then another, flash from the bell tower. Within moments, silversmith Paul Revere and his fellow messengers rode off to give news of the British army's approach to the militia and the people living in the countryside. By sunrise, an advance guard of a few hundred redcoats reached the town of Lexington, where they expected to apprehend Adams and Hancock. In the pale light, they saw about seventy colonial militiamen waiting on the village green. No order came to fire, but in the confusion shots rang out. Eight Americans were killed, most of them shot in the back as they ran for safety. Nine more were wounded. Later Americans would insist that the first musket fired at Lexington sounded a "shot heard 'round the world."

The British troops marched from Lexington to Concord. Surprised to find the town nearly deserted, they began a methodical search for weapons. All they uncovered were five hundred musket balls, which they dumped into a nearby pond. They then burned the town's liberty tree. Ignoring this act of provocation, the Concord **Minutemen**, in hiding nearby, waited patiently. When the moment seemed right, they swooped down on the unsuspecting British troops guarding the town's North Bridge.

The sudden attack by the Americans shocked the redcoats, who fled in a panic back toward Boston. The Minutemen followed, gathering more men along the path of pursuit. Together, these American farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers terrorized the British soldiers, firing on them at will from behind barns, stone walls, and trees. When the shaken troops reached the British encampment across the Charles River from Boston, 73 of their comrades were dead, 174 were wounded, and 26 were missing. The day after the **Battles of Lexington and Concord**, thousands of New England militiamen poured in from the surrounding countryside, dug trenches, and laid siege to Boston. As far as they and thousands of other Americans were concerned—including the loyalist refugees crowded into the city—war had begun.

**Minutemen** Nickname first given to the Concord militia because of their speed in assembling; the term later applied generally to colonial militia during the Revolution.

**Battles of Lexington and Concord** Two confrontations in April 1775 between British soldiers and patriot Minutemen; the first recognized battles of the Revolution.

## The Second Continental Congress

When the Continental Congress reconvened in May 1775, it began at once to ready the colonies for war. This Second Continental Congress authorized the printing of American paper money for the purchase of supplies and appointed a committee to oversee foreign relations. It approved the creation of a Continental Army and chose George Washington, the Virginia veteran of the French and Indian War, to serve as its commander.

Across the Atlantic, British leaders struggled to find some negotiating points despite the king's refusal to bend. The king, loathe to compromise, persuaded Parliament to pass an **American Prohibitory Act** instructing the royal navy to seize American ships engaged in any form of trade, "as if the same were the ships . . . of open enemies." For all intents and purposes, King George III declared war on his colonies before the colonies declared war on their king.

War was a fact, yet few American voices were calling for a complete political and emotional break with Britain. Even the most ardent patriots continued to justify their actions as upholding the British constitution. They were rebelling, they said, to preserve the rights guaranteed to English citizens, not to establish an independent nation. Their drastic actions were necessary because a corrupt Parliament and corrupt ministers were trampling on those rights.

Few colonists had yet traced the source of their oppression to George III himself. If any American political leaders believed the king was as corrupt as his advisers and his Parliament, they did not make this view public. Then, in January 1776, Thomas Paine, an Englishman who had emigrated to America a few years earlier, published a pamphlet he called **Common Sense**. Paine's pamphlet broke the silence about King George III.

Paine was a corset maker by trade but a political radical by temperament. As soon as he settled in Philadelphia, he became a wholehearted and vocal supporter of the colonial protest to defend colonial rights, but he preferred American political independence. In *Common Sense*, Paine spoke directly to ordinary citizens, not to their political leaders. Like the preachers of the Great Awakening, he rejected the formal language of the elite, adopting instead a plain, urgent, and emotional vocabulary and writing style designed to reach a mass audience.

*Common Sense* sold 120,000 copies in its first three months in print. Paine attacked the monarchy head-on, challenging the idea of a hereditary ruler and questioning the value of monarchy as an institution. Paine's defiance of traditional authority and open criticism of the men who wielded it helped many of his readers, both male and female, discard the last shreds of loyalty to the king and to the Empire. The impact of Paine's words resounded in the taverns and coffeehouses, where ordinary farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and laborers took up his call for independence and the creation of a republic. Political leaders acknowledged Paine's importance, although some begrudged the popular admiration lavished on this poorly educated artisan. The Harvard-trained John Adams reluctantly admitted that *Common Sense* was a "tolerable summary of the arguments I have been repeating again and again in Congress for nine months." But Adams's social snobbery led him to criticize Paine's language and his flamboyant writing style, suitable, Adams insisted, only "for an emigrant from new Gate [an English prison] or one chiefly associated with such company."

## Declaring Independence

The Second Continental Congress, lagging far behind popular sentiment, inched its way toward a formal declaration of independence. But even John Adams took heart when the Congress opened American trade to all nations except Great Britain in early April 1776 and instructed the colonies to create official state governments. Then, on

**American Prohibitory Act** British law of 1775 that authorized the royal navy to seize all American ships engaged in trade; it amounted to a declaration of war.

**Common Sense** Revolutionary pamphlet written by Thomas Paine in 1776; it attacked George III, argued against monarchy, and advanced the patriot cause.

# Investigating America

## Thomas Paine's Common Sense, 1776

Unique in content as well as style, Paine's pamphlet abandoned conventional praise for the British political system. Whereas earlier writers had criticized the king or his ministers for their actions, the radical Paine attacked the very existence of a hereditary monarchy itself. Common Americans, he insisted, had the ability to be their own king and were far more deserving of leadership posts than most of those who had worn English crowns.

England, since the conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones, yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one. A French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right, if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and lion, and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility, nor disturb their devotion. . . .

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert, that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe . . . .

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young; nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase parent or mother country hath been jesuitically adopted by the king and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers off civil and religious liberty from every Part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home pursues their descendants still. . . .

- How did Paine's essay lead Americans to think not merely about independence but also about republicanism?
- Read Charles Inglis's response later in this chapter, as well as Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (in the Documents section at the end of this book). Why did Paine disagree with loyalists such as Inglis about the wisdom of remaining within the British Empire?
- How did Paine make the very idea of a monarchy ridiculous?
- Of the three documents, which is the easiest to read and understand?

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Source: Eric Foner, ed., *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings* (New York, 1995).



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

June 7, Adams's close ally in the struggle to announce independence, Virginia lawyer Richard Henry Lee, rose on the floor of the Congress and offered this straightforward motion: "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

Lee's resolution was no more than a statement of reality, yet the Congress chose to postpone its final vote until July. The delay would give members time to win over the few

fainthearted delegates from the Middle Colonies. It also would allow the committee appointed to draft a formal declaration of independence time to complete its work.

Congress had chosen an all-star group to draft the declaration, including John Adams, Connecticut's Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, and New York landowner Robert Livingston. But these men delegated the task of writing the document to the fifth and youngest member of the committee, Thomas Jefferson. They chose well. The 33-year-old Virginian was not a social radical like Samuel Adams and Tom Paine. He was not an experienced politician like John Adams or Franklin. But Jefferson could draw on a deep and broad knowledge of political theory and philosophy. He had read the works of Enlightenment philosophers, classical theorists, and seventeenth-century English revolutionaries. And though shy, Thomas Jefferson was a master of written prose. Jefferson began the **Declaration of Independence** with a defense of revolution based on "self-evident" truths about humanity's "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Jefferson argued that these natural rights came from the "Creator" rather than developing out of human law, government, or tradition. They were broader and more sacred than the specific "rights of Englishmen." With this philosophical groundwork in place, Jefferson moved on to list the grievances demanding that America end its relationship with Britain. He focused on the king's abuse of power rather than on the oppressive legislation passed by Parliament. All government rested on the consent of the governed, Jefferson asserted, and the people had the right to overthrow any government that tyrannized rather than protected them, that threatened rather than respected their unalienable rights. (The Declaration is in the Documents section at the end of this book.)

### Declaring Loyalties

Delegates to the Second Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence on July 2, 1776, and made their approval public on July 4. As John Adams was fond of saying, "The die had been cast," and Americans of every region, religion, social class, and race had to choose between loyalty to king or to a new nation. In the face of such a critical choice, many wavered. Throughout the war that followed, a surprising number of colonists clung to neutrality, hoping that the breach could be resolved without their having to participate or choose sides.

Not all colonists who chose loyalism revered the Crown or the principles on which the British political system was based. For many, the deciding issues were economic. Holders of royal offices and merchants who depended on trade with British manufacturers found loyalty the compelling option. The loyalist ranks were also filled with colonists from the "multitude." Many small farmers and tenant farmers gave their support to the Crown when their political and economic foes—the great planters of the South or the New York manor lords—became patriots. The choice of which side to back often hinged, therefore, on local struggles and economic conflicts rather than on imperial issues.

For African Americans, the rallying call of liberty was familiar long before the Revolution began. Decades of slave resistance and rebellion demonstrated that black colonists did not need the impassioned language of a Patrick Henry or a Samuel Adams to remind them of the value of freedom. Instead, many slaves viewed the Revolution as they viewed epidemics and imperial warfare: as a potential opportunity to gain their own liberty. In the same way, free blacks saw the Revolution as a possible opportunity to win civil rights they had been denied before 1776.

Some patriots worried that slaves would seek their freedom by supporting the British in the war. In 1775 Lord Dunmore, the deposed royal governor of Virginia, expressed his intention to "arm all my own Negroes and receive all others that will come to me

**Declaration of Independence** A formal statement, adopted by the Second Continental Congress in 1776, that listed justifications for rebellion and declared the American mainland colonies to be independent of Britain.

# Investigating America

## Charles Inglis's The True Interest of America, 1776

Charles Inglis, Anglican minister and rector of New York City's Trinity Church, was one of the few loyalists who dared take issue with Paine's *Common Sense*. His response came in a 1776 pamphlet called *The True Interest of America Impartially Stated*. In the portion of his pamphlet reprinted here, Inglis expressed horror at the prospect of breaking a sacred oath of allegiance to the Church of England and the Crown. Most loyalists who held appointed office and most Anglican ministers shared his feelings on this issue. His vision of the chaos, devastation, and humiliation the rebellious colonists would suffer was echoed in the private letters of loyalists everywhere.

.....

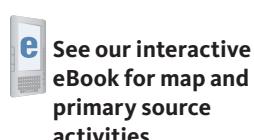
**T**he blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries— it is time to be reconciled, it is time to lay aside those animosities which have pushed on Britons to shed the blood of Britons; it is high time that those who are connected by the endearing ties of religion, kindred and country, should resume their former friendship, and be united in the bond of mutual affection, as their interests are inseparably united . . . By a Reconciliation with Great-Britain, Peace—that fairest offspring and gift of Heaven—will be restored . . . What uneasiness and anxiety, what evils, has this short interruption of peace with the parent-state, brought on the whole British empire!

Suppose we were to revolt from Great-Britain, declare ourselves Independent, and set up a Republic of our own—what would be the consequence? I stand aghast at the prospect—my blood runs chill when I think of the calamities,

the complicated evils that must ensue . . . All our property throughout the continent would be unhinged; the greatest confusion, and most violent convulsions would take place . . . What a horrid situation would thousands be reduced to who have taken the oath of allegiance to the King; yet contrary to their oath, as well as inclination, must be compelled to renounce that allegiance, or abandon all their property in America! How many thousands more would be reduced to a similar situation; who, although they took not that oath, yet would think it inconsistent with their duty and a good conscience to renounce their Sovereign . . .

The importance of these colonies to Britain need not be enlarged on, it is a thing so universally known. The greater their importance is to her, so much the more obstinate will her struggle be not to lose them . . . Great-Britain therefore must, for her own preservation, risk everything, and exert her whole strength, to prevent such an event from taking place. This being the case—Devastation and ruin must mark the progress of this war along the sea coast of America. Hitherto, Britain has not exerted her power . . . But as soon as we declare for independency . . . ruthless war, with all its aggravated horrors, will ravage our once happy land. . . . Torrents of blood will be spilt, and thousands reduced to beggary and wretchedness . . .

- If you were writing a patriot response to Inglis's dire scenario, how would you refute his predictions of American defeat? What American advantages would you cite? What British disadvantages?



**insurrection** An uprising against a legitimate authority or government.

whom I shall declare free.” Rumors of this plan horrified neighboring Maryland planters, who demanded that their governor issue arms and ammunition to protect against slave **insurrection**. Throughout the South, white communities braced themselves for a black struggle for freedom that would emerge in the midst of the colonial struggle for independence.

Dunmore's offer to free “all indentured Servants, negroes or others . . . able and willing to bear Arms who escaped their masters” was aimed at disrupting the slave-based plantation economy of his American enemies, not at securing African American rights. Yet slaves responded, crossing into British lines in great enough numbers to create an “Ethiopian Regiment” of soldiers. These black loyalists wore a banner across their



Peter Salem (1750–1816) was an African American soldier who fought in the battle of Concord on April 19, 1775, and later in the Battle of Bunker Hill. After the war, he returned to his home state of Massachusetts where he died in a poor house at the age of 66. Schomburg Center/Art Resource, NY.

uniforms that read “Liberty to Slaves.” Only six hundred to two thousand slaves managed to escape their masters in 1775–1776, but in the southern campaigns of the long war that followed, thousands of black men, women, and children made their way to the British lines. Once in uniform, black soldiers were usually assigned to work in road construction and other manual labor tasks rather than participate in combat. Perhaps as many as fifty thousand slaves gained their freedom during the war, as a result of either British policy or the disruptions that made escape possible.

Indians’ responses to news of the war were far from uniform. At first, many considered the Revolution a family quarrel that should be avoided. But as the British continued to press for Indian participation in the war, many Indian tribes and confederations eventually decided that the Crown would better serve their interests and respect their rights than would the colonists. First, the British were much more likely than the colonists to be able to provide a steady supply of the manufactured goods and weapons the Indians relied on in the eighteenth century. Second, colonial territorial ambitions threatened the Indians along the southern and northwestern frontiers. Third, an alliance with the British offered some possibility of recouping land and trading benefits lost in the past. No uniformity emerged, however. Among the Iroquois, for example, conflicting choices of loyalties led pro-British Senecas to burn the crops and houses of Oneidas who had joined forces with the patriots. Among the Potowatomis, similar divisions occurred. Intertribal rivalries and Indians’ concerns about the safety of their own villages often determined alignments. In the southern backcountry, fierce fighting between Indians and revolutionaries seemed a continuation of the century’s many border wars. But even there, alignments could shift. Although the Cherokees began the war as British allies, a split developed, producing an internal civil war similar to the one among the Iroquois tribes.

Fewer than half of the colonists threw in their lot with the revolutionaries. As Americans—English, European, Indian, and African American—armed themselves or fled from the violence and bloodshed they saw coming, they realized that the conflict wore two faces: this was a war for independence, but it was also a civil war. In the South, it pitted slave against master, Cherokee against Cherokee, and frontier farmer against tidewater planter. In New England, it set neighbor against neighbor, forcing scores of loyalist families to flee. In some instances, children were set against parents, and wives refused to support the cause their husbands had chosen. Whatever the outcome of the struggle ahead, Americans knew that it would come at great cost.

# Summary

The British victory in the Great War for Empire produced many new problems. The British had to govern the French population in Canada and maintain security against Indians on a greatly expanded colonial frontier. They had to pay an enormous war debt but continue to finance strong and well-equipped armed forces to keep the empire they had won. To deal with these new circumstances, the English government chose to impose revenue-raising measures on the colonies.

The Sugar Act of 1764 tightened customs collections, the Stamp Act of 1765 placed a direct tax on legal documents, and the Townshend Acts of 1767 set import taxes on English products such as paint and tea. Colonists protested this sharp shift in policy for they saw Parliament's revenue-raising actions as an abuse of power. Political debate in the colonies began to focus on endangered rights and on the possibility that the British government meant to curtail American liberties.

Crowds directed by the Sons of Liberty attacked royal officials, and in Boston five civilians died in a clash with British troops known as the Boston Massacre. Colony-wide boycotts of British goods were the most effective form of protest. They led to the repeal of all three taxes.

Political activists prepared for a quick and united response to any new crises by creating organizations such as the committees of correspondence. In 1773 the British passed the Tea Act. They expected little American

opposition, but they were wrong. In Boston a group of activists dumped thousands of pounds' worth of tea into the harbor.

The "Boston Tea Party" enraged British officials. As a punishment, the English closed the port of Boston to all trade. This and other Intolerable Acts infuriated colonists, who took united action in support of Massachusetts. A new colonial forum, the First Continental Congress, met in 1774 to debate the colonies' relationship to England and to issue a united protest. The king rejected any attempts at compromise, declaring that "blows must decide."

After British troops and militiamen fought at Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress prepared for war. Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* pushed many reluctant colonists into the revolutionary camp. Not even a reasoned rebuttal of this call to revolution, such as the one written by Inglis, could halt the progress toward independence after this. In July 1776, Congress issued the Declaration of Independence. In it, Jefferson defended the colonists' right to resist a tyrannical king. Yet Americans faced the difficult task of choosing sides: loyalty to the Crown or revolution. African Americans and Indians had to decide whether to offer support to one side or the other or try to remain neutral in the midst of revolution. The outcome was both a war for colonial independence and a civil war that divided families and communities across America.

## Key Terms

George III, p. 100  
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# Re-creating America: Independence and a New Nation

## 1775–1783

## CHAPTER 6

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Deborah Sampson

Deborah Sampson was born into a poor Massachusetts family in 1760 and was hired out as a servant when she was a young girl. By the time the Revolutionary War began, her future held few choices. With no dowry, she was unlikely to marry; with no special training, she was likely to remain a servant. But Sampson discovered another option—and she took it. Disguising herself as a man, she enlisted as a soldier in the Continental Army. Just as the colonies changed themselves into an independent nation, Deborah Sampson changed herself into Private Robert Shurtleff.

As a woman, Sampson might have played a role in the war by serving as a spy. Or she might have joined thousands of other women in the army camps, performing valuable services such as cooking, laundering, and nursing. She might have remained safely at home, knitting socks or making uniforms for the poorly clad soldiers serving under General Washington. But none of these alternatives would have given her what military service offered: the chance to see new places, an enlistment bonus, a pension if she survived, and a promise of land when the war ended. Thousands of poor young men risked the dangers of the battlefield for these rewards. Why not Deborah Sampson?

Perhaps patriotism also prompted her to abandon her petticoats for a uniform. But whatever her motives, Deborah Sampson proved herself a clever soldier, for she managed to hide her identity for several years, even when she was wounded in the leg by a musket ball. The truth of her gender was finally discovered when she was hospitalized for a fever.

On October 25, 1783, Deborah Sampson was granted an honorable discharge. The next spring, she married Benjamin Gannett and began a family. As a wife and mother, she was expected to give up any role in the public sphere. But once again she proved herself a rebel: in 1802 she traveled throughout New England giving



#### DEBORAH SAMPSON

Whether attracted by adventure or the bounty soldiers received upon enlistment, Sampson decided to disguise herself as a man and enlist in the Continental Army in 1781. She served for over two years before officers discovered she was a woman and discharged her.

This portrait, drawn by Joseph Stone Framingham, depicts Sampson in female dress but surrounds her with the military emblems befitting a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Joseph Stone, Portrait of Deborah Sampson (Gannett). Rhode Island. 1797. Oil on paper. Courtesy, the Rhode Island Historical Society [RH X5 32].

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### *The First Two Years of War*

- The Battle for Boston
- Congress Creates an Army
- The British Strategy in 1776
- Escape from New York
- Winter Quarters and Winter Victories
- Burgoyne's New York Campaign
- Winter Quarters in 1777

#### *Diplomacy Abroad and Profiteering at Home*

- The Long Road to Formal Recognition
- War and the American Public

#### *From Stalemate to Victory*

- The War Stalls in the North
- The Second Carolinas Campaign
- Treason and Triumph
- Winning Diplomatic Independence

#### *Republican Expectations in a New Nation*

- The Protection of Fundamental Rights
- Legal Reforms
- Women in the New Republic

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Esther DeBerdt Reed on the Usefulness of Women, 1780

- The War's Impact on Slaves and Slavery

#### **IT MATTERS TODAY:** Tracking Changes in Gender Roles

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** George Washington on Black Loyalists, 1783

#### **Summary**

public lectures on her military career. The tales she told the crowds who flocked to see her were undoubtedly full of exaggerated claims of battlefield heroics. Yet, dressed in her uniform once again, performing a precision drill on stage, Sampson demonstrated the unexpected impact of the Revolution on an ordinary American's life.

The war that changed Deborah Sampson's life, and the lives of most colonists, began in April 1775 as a skirmish at Concord's North Bridge. Great Britain expected an easy victory over the colonial rebels, and, on paper the odds against an American victory were staggering. To crush the colonial rebellion, Great Britain could commit vast human and material resources. The well-trained and harshly disciplined British ground troops were assisted and supplied by the most powerful navy in the world, and they carried the flag of Europe's richest imperial power. Many Indian tribes, including most of the Iroquois, allied with the British, and the Crown could expect thousands of white and black loyalists to fight beside them as well.

The American resources were far less impressive. The Continental Congress had a nearly empty treasury, and the country had none of the foundries needed to produce arms, ammunition, or other military supplies. The army administration was inefficient, the population was wary of professional soldiers, and the new state governments were unwilling to raise tax monies to contribute to Congress's war chest. Through most of the war, American officers and enlisted men could expect to be underpaid or not paid at all. They were likely to go into battle poorly equipped, often half-starved, and frequently dressed in rags. Unlike the British redcoats, these Americans had little military skill or formal military training. Most were as new to military life as Deborah Sampson.

Britain's advantage was not absolute, however. The British had to transport arms, provisions, and men across thousands of miles of ocean. They risked delays, disasters, and destruction of supplies on the open seas. The Americans, on the other hand, were fighting on familiar terrain, and geography gave them an additional advantage: their vast, rural society could not be easily conquered even if major colonial cities were taken. Longstanding European rivalries gave the Americans valuable allies. Holland, France, and Spain all stood to gain from England's distress, and they willingly lent money and provided much-needed supplies to the rebellion. In 1778, when France and Spain decided to formally recognize American independence, the war suddenly expanded into a global struggle. The support of the French navy transformed Washington's military strategy and led eventually to the defeat of the British army at Yorktown.

## The First Two Years of War

- ★ **What were the British and American strategies in the early years of the war?**
- ★ **What decisions and constraints kept the British from achieving the quick victory many expected?**

**Thomas Gage** British general who was military governor of Massachusetts and commander of the army occupying Boston in 1775.

In 1775 **Thomas Gage**, the British general serving as military governor of Massachusetts and commander of the British army of occupation there, wished he were anywhere but Boston. The town was unsophisticated by British standards, many of its inhabitants were unfriendly, and its taverns and lodging houses bulged at the seams with complaining loyalist refugees from the countryside. Gage's army was restless, and his officers were bored.

# Chronology

<b>1775</b>	Battle for Boston George Washington assumes command of Continental Army	<b>1780</b>	Fall of Charleston Treason of Benedict Arnold Pennsylvania enacts manumission statute
<b>1776</b>	Declaration of Independence British campaigns in South and mid-Atlantic region George Mason's Declaration of Rights	<b>1781</b>	Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown Loyalists evacuate United States Articles of Confederation government established
<b>1777</b>	Burgoyne's New York campaign Battle of Saratoga Winter at Valley Forge	<b>1782</b>	British Parliament votes to end war
<b>1778</b>	American-French alliance British begin second southern campaign	<b>1783</b>	Treaty of Paris signed

The American encampments outside the city were growing daily, filling with local farmers and artisans after the bloodshed of Lexington and Concord. These thousands of colonial **militiamen** gathering on the hills surrounding Boston were clearly the military enemy. Yet, in 1775 they were still citizens of the British Empire, not foreign invaders or foes. Gage, like his American opponents, was caught up in the dilemmas of an undeclared war.

**militiamen** Soldiers who were not members of a regular army but ordinary citizens called out in case of an emergency.

## The Battle for Boston

With proper artillery, well placed on the hills surrounding the city, the Americans could have done serious damage to Gage's army of occupation. The problem was that the rebels had no cannon. A New Haven druggist named **Benedict Arnold** joined forces with Vermont farmer Ethan Allen to solve the problem. In May 1775, their troops captured Fort Ticonderoga in New York and began the difficult task of transporting the fort's cannon across hundreds of miles of forests to Boston. By the time the artillery reached the city, however, a bloody battle between Gage and the American militia had already taken place.

**Benedict Arnold** Pharmacist-turned-military-leader whose bravery made him an American hero and a favorite of Washington until he committed treason in 1780.

In early June, Gage issued a proclamation declaring all armed colonists traitors, but he offered **amnesty** to any rebel who surrendered to British authorities. When the militiamen ignored the general's offer, Gage decided a show of force was necessary. On June 17, 1775, under cover of cannon fire from a British warship in Boston harbor, Gage's fellow officer, **William Howe**, led a force of twenty-four hundred soldiers against rebel-held Breed's Hill. Despite the oppressive heat and humidity of the day, General Howe ordered his men to advance in full dress uniform, weighed down with wool jackets and heavy knapsacks. Howe also insisted on making a "proper" frontal attack on the Americans. From the top of the hill, Captain William Prescott's militiamen immediately opened fire on the unprotected redcoats. The result was a near massacre. The tables turned, however, when the Americans ran out of ammunition. Most of Prescott's men fled in confusion, and the British soldiers bayoneted the few who remained to defend their position.

**amnesty** A general pardon granted by a government, especially for political offenses.

Even battle-worn veterans were shocked at the carnage of the day. The British suffered more casualties that June afternoon than they would in any other battle of the war.

**William Howe** British general in command at the Battle of Bunker Hill; three years later he became commander in chief of British forces in America.

**Battle of Bunker Hill** British assault on American troops on Breed's Hill near Boston in June 1775; the British won the battle but suffered heavy losses.

**George Washington** Commander in chief of the Continental Army; he led Americans to victory in the Revolution and later became the first president of the United States.

**Richard Howe** British admiral who commanded British naval forces in America; he was General William Howe's brother.

**Hessian troops** German soldiers from the state of Hesse who were hired by Britain to fight in the American Revolution.

The Americans, who retreated to the safety of Cambridge, learned a costly lesson on the importance of an effective supply line of arms and ammunition to their fighting men. Little was gained by either side. That the battle was misnamed the **Battle of Bunker Hill** captured perfectly the confusion and the absurdity of the encounter.

### Congress Creates an Army

While militiamen and redcoats turned the Boston area into a war zone, the Continental Congress took its first steps toward recruiting and supplying an army. The “regular” army that took shape was not really a national force. It was a collection of small state armies whose recruits preserved their local or regional identities. While this army was expected to follow the war wherever it led, the Continental Congress still relied on each state’s militia to join in any battles that took place within its borders.

Congress chose French and Indian War veteran **George Washington** to command the Continental forces. Washington wrote gloomily of the enormity of the task before him. Nothing he saw when he reached Massachusetts on July 3, 1775, made him more optimistic. A carnival atmosphere seemed to prevail inside the militiamen’s camps. Farm boys fired their muskets at random, often using their weapons to start fires or to shoot at geese flying overhead. In the confusion, they sometimes accidentally wounded or killed themselves. “Seldom a day passes but some persons are shot by their friends,” Washington noted in amazement.

The British, meanwhile, laid plans for the evacuation of Boston, spurred in part by the knowledge that Arnold’s wagon train of cannon was nearing Massachusetts. In March 1776 a fleet arrived to carry Gage, his officers, the British army, and almost a thousand loyalist refugees north to the safety of Halifax, Nova Scotia. By this time, command of His Majesty’s war was in the hands of the Howe brothers—General William Howe, commander of the Breed’s Hill attack, and **Richard Howe**, an admiral in the royal navy. With the help of military strategists and the vast resources of the Crown, the Howes were expected to bring the rebellion to a speedy end and restore order to the colonies.

### The British Strategy in 1776

General Howe was less concerned with suppressing the radicalism of New England than the king had been. He thought the most effective strategy would be to locate areas with high concentrations of loyalists and mobilize them to secure the allegiance of their undecided and even rebellious neighbors. Howe and his advisers targeted two reputed centers of loyalist strength. The first—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania—had a legacy of social and economic conflicts that had caused many of the region’s elite families to fear that independence threatened their prosperity. But loyalism was not confined to the conservative and wealthy. Its second stronghold was among the poor settlers of the Carolina backcountry. There, decades of bitter struggle between the coastal planters and the backcountry farmers had led to intense loyalist sentiment among many of the embattled westerners.

General Howe’s strategy had its flaws, however. First, although many people in these two regions were loyal, their numbers were never as great as the British assumed. Second, everywhere they went, British and **Hessian troops** left behind a trail of destruction and memories of abuse that alienated many Americans who might have considered remaining loyal. Howe was not likely to win over families who saw their “cattle killed and lying about the fields and pastures, with ‘furniture hacked and broken into pieces’ and ‘tools destroyed.’”

Nevertheless, in 1776 Howe launched his first major military assaults in the South and the mid-Atlantic region. The campaign in the South, directed by General Henry

Clinton, went badly. In North Carolina, loyalists did turn out to fight for the Crown, but the British failed to provide them the military support they needed. Poorly armed and badly outnumbered, Carolina loyalists were decisively defeated by the rebel militia on February 27 in the Battle of Moore's Creek. Rather than rush to their defense, the British abandoned their loyalist allies in favor of taking revenge on South Carolina. Clinton and an impressive fleet of fifty ships and three thousand men sailed into Charleston harbor. But the British had unexpected bad luck. As the troops started to wade ashore, they found themselves stranded on small islands surrounded by a sudden rush of tidal waters. The Americans, on the other hand, had unexpected good luck. Working frantically to defend the harbor, they constructed a flimsy fort out of local palmetto wood. To the surprise of both sides, the cannon balls fired by British ships sank harmlessly into the absorbent, pulpy palmetto stockade. The fort—and the city of Charleston—remained standing.

Embarrassed and frustrated, the British command abruptly ended its southern campaign. General Clinton, a gloomy man under the best of circumstances, sailed north, eager to escape the scene of his humiliation. The South Carolina loyalists, however, could not escape British failures. They had been denounced, mobbed, imprisoned, and sometimes tortured since 1775. Their situation grew even worse after the British withdrew.

### Escape from New York

While Clinton was failing in the Carolinas, the Howe brothers were preparing a massive invasion of the mid-Atlantic region. In July 1776, Admiral Howe and General Howe sailed into New York harbor with the largest expeditionary force of the eighteenth century. With thirty thousand men, one-third of them Hessian mercenaries, this British army was larger than the peacetime population of New York City.

The Howes were not eager to demolish New York, however. Unlike most British officers, the brothers were genuinely fond of Americans, and they preferred to be agents of compromise and negotiation rather than of destruction. They hoped that a spectacular show of force and a thorough humiliation of rebel commander George Washington would be enough to bring the Americans to their senses and end the rebellion. When that failed to happen, the Howes finally began to advance on the city in the early morning of August 22, 1776. The British landed unopposed and moved toward the Brooklyn neck of Long Island. Just as Washington had feared, his raw and inexperienced troops quickly broke when fighting began five days later. Cut off from one another, confused by the attack, almost all the American troops surrendered or ran. A single Maryland regiment made a heroic stand against the landing forces but was destroyed by the oncoming British. Washington, at the scene himself, might have been captured had the Howes pressed their advantage. But they withdrew, content that they had made the American commander look foolish.

Washington took advantage of the Howes' delay to bring his troops to the safety of Manhattan Island. In a skirmish at Harlem Heights, the American commander was relieved to see his men stand their ground and win their first combat victory. He was even more relieved by the strange failure of the British to press their advantage. The British had only to follow his army into Westchester County and deliver a crushing blow, but they did not. When the redcoats finally engaged the Continentals again at White Plains, the Americans managed to retreat safely. Soon afterward, Washington took his army across the Hudson River to New Jersey and marched them farther west, across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

### Winter Quarters and Winter Victories

Following European customs, General Howe established winter quarters for his troops before the cold set in. Redcoats and Hessians made their camps in the New York area that December, expecting Washington to make camp somewhere as well. But Washington, safe for the moment in Pennsylvania, was too restless to settle in just yet. Enlistment terms in his army would soon be up, and without some encouraging military success, he feared few of his soldiers would reenlist. Washington looked eagerly for a good target to attack—and found one. Across the Delaware, on the Jersey side, two or three thousand Hessian troops held a garrison near the town of Trenton.

On Christmas night, amid a howling storm, Washington led twenty-four hundred of his men back across the river. Marching through a raging blizzard, the Americans arrived to find the Hessians asleep. The surprised enemy surrendered immediately. Without losing a single man in the **Battle of Trenton**, Washington had captured nine hundred prisoners and many badly needed military supplies. Taking full advantage of the moment, Washington made a rousing appeal to his men to reenlist. About half of the soldiers agreed to remain.

The Trenton victory raised the morale of the Continental Army as it settled at last into its winter quarters near Morristown, New Jersey. They stirred popular support also. Of course, Howe's army was still poised to march on Philadelphia when warm weather revived the war again. And Congress still had few resources to spare for Washington and his men. When Washington pleaded for supplies, Congress urged him to commandeer what he needed from civilians nearby. The general wisely refused. English high-handedness and cruelty had turned many people of the area into staunch supporters of the Revolution, and Washington had no intention of alienating them by seizing their livestock, food, or weapons.

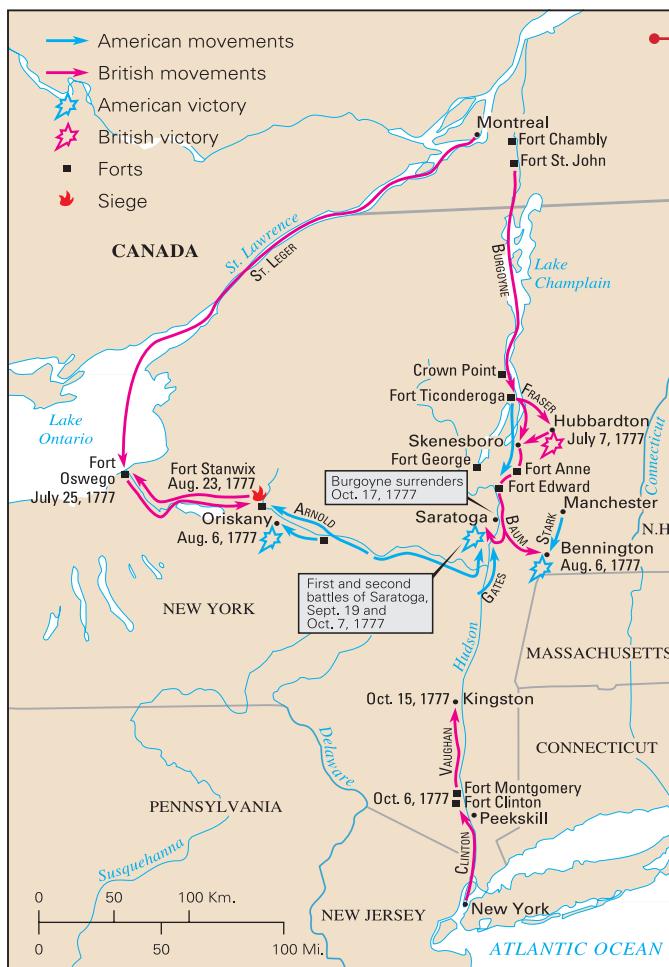
### Burgoyne's New York Campaign

In July 1777, General William Howe sailed with fifteen thousand men up the Chesapeake Bay toward Philadelphia. The Continental Congress had already fled the city, knowing that Washington could not prevent the enemy occupation. The Americans made two efforts to block Howe, first at Brandywine Creek and then at Germantown, but the British had little difficulty capturing Philadelphia. The problems they did face in 1777 came not from Washington but from the poor judgment of one of their own, a flamboyant young general named **John Burgoyne**.

Burgoyne had won approval for an elaborate plan to sever New England from the rest of the American colonies. He would move his army south from Montreal, while a second army of redcoats and Iroquois, commanded by Colonel Barry St. Leger, would veer east across the Mohawk Valley from Fort Oswego. At the same time, William Howe would send a third force north from New York City. The three armies would rendezvous at Albany, effectively isolating New England and, it was assumed, giving the British a perfect opportunity to crush the rebellion. The plan was daring and appeared to have every chance of success. In reality, however, it had serious flaws. First, neither Burgoyne nor the British officials in England had any knowledge of the American terrain that had to be covered. Second, they badly misjudged the Indian support St. Leger would receive. Third, General Howe, no longer in New York City, knew absolutely nothing of his own critical role in the plan. Blissfully unaware of these problems, Burgoyne led his army from Montreal in high spirits in June 1777 (see Map 6.1). The troops floated down Lake Champlain in canoes and flatbottom boats and easily retook Fort Ticonderoga. From Ticonderoga, the invading army continued to march toward Albany. From this point on, however, things began to go badly for Burgoyne.

**Battle of Trenton** Battle on December 26, 1776, when Washington led his troops by night across the Delaware River and captured a Hessian garrison wintering in New Jersey.

**John Burgoyne** British general forced to surrender his entire army at Saratoga, New York, in October 1777.



**MAP 6.1** The Burgoyne Campaign, 1777

The defeat of General John Burgoyne and his army at Saratoga was a major turning point in the war. It led to the recognition of American independence by France and later by Spain and to a military alliance with both of these European powers. This map shows American and British troop movement and the locations and dates of the Saratoga battles leading to the British surrender.

In true eighteenth-century British style, “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne chose to travel well rather than lightly. The thirty wagons bumping along behind the general contained over fifty pieces of artillery. They also contained Burgoyne’s mistress, her personal wardrobe, and a generous supply of champagne. When the caravan encountered New York’s swamps and gullies, movement slowed to a snail’s pace. The Americans took full advantage of Burgoyne’s folly. Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys harassed the British as they entered Allen’s home region of Vermont. A bloody, head-on battle near Bennington further slowed Burgoyne’s progress. When the general’s army finally reached Albany in mid-September, neither St. Leger nor Howe was in sight.

The full support St. Leger had counted on from the Iroquois had not materialized, and he met fierce resistance as he made his way to the rendezvous point. When news reached him that Benedict Arnold and an army of a thousand Americans were approaching, St. Leger simply turned around and took his exhausted men to safety at Fort Niagara. Howe, of course, had no idea that he was expected in Albany. This left John Burgoyne stranded in the heart of New York. By mid-September 1777, his supplies dwindling, he realized his only option was to break northward through the American lines and take refuge in Canada. On September 19, Burgoyne attacked, hoping to clear a path of retreat for his army. The elderly American general, **Horatio Gates**, was neither bold nor particularly

**Horatio Gates** Elderly Virginia general who led the American troops to victory in the Battle of Saratoga.

clever, but it took little daring to defeat Burgoyne's weary, dispirited British soldiers. When Burgoyne tried once again to break through on October 7, Gates and his men held their ground. On October 17, 1777, General John Burgoyne surrendered.

News that a major British army had been defeated spread quickly on both sides of the Atlantic. It was a powerful boost to American confidence and an equally powerful blow to British self-esteem. The report also reversed the fortunes of American diplomatic efforts. Until Saratoga, American appeals to the governments of Spain, France, and Holland for supplies, loans, and military support had met with only moderate success. Now, hopes ran high that France would recognize independence and join the war effort.

### Winter Quarters in 1777

John Adams, who never wore a uniform, had once toasted a “short and Violent war.” After Burgoyne’s defeat, many Americans believed that Adams’s wish was coming true. General Washington, however, did not share their optimism.

French help might be coming, he pointed out, but who knew when? In the meantime, he reminded Congress the Continental Army still needed funds and supplies. Congress ignored all his urgent requests. The result was the long and dreadful winter at Valley Forge. **Valley Forge** was 20 miles from Philadelphia, where General Howe and his army were comfortably housed for the winter. Throughout December 1777, Washington’s men labored to build the huts and cabins they needed. Whereas two officers were assigned to share quarters, a dozen enlisted men were expected to crowd into a 14-by-16-foot hut. Rations were a problem from the start. Technically, each man was entitled to raw or cured meat, yet most soldiers at Valley Forge lived entirely on a diet of fire cakes, made of flour and water baked in the coals or over the fire on a stick. Blankets were scarce, coats were rare, and firewood was precious.

The enlisted men who survived the winter at Valley Forge were strangers to luxury even in peacetime. Like Deborah Sampson, most were from the humblest social classes: farm laborers, servants, apprentices, even former slaves. They were exactly the sort of person most Americans believed ought to fight the war. But if poverty had driven them into the army, a commitment to see the war through kept them there. The contrast between their own patriotism and the apparent indifference of the civilian population made many of these soldiers bitter. Private Joseph Plumb Martin expressed the feelings of most when he said “a kind and holy Providence” had done more to help the army while it was at Valley Forge “than did the country in whose service we were wearing away our lives by piecemeal.”

What these soldiers desperately needed, in addition to new clothes, good food, and hot baths, was professional military training. And that is the one thing they did get, beginning in the spring of 1778, when an unlikely Prussian volunteer arrived at Valley Forge. **Baron Friedrich von Steuben** was almost 50 years old, dignified, elegantly dressed, with a dazzling gold and diamond medal always displayed on his chest. Like most foreign volunteers, many of whom plagued Washington more than they helped him, the baron claimed to be an aristocrat, to have vast military experience, and to have held high rank in a European army. In truth, he had purchased his title only a short time before fleeing his homeland in bankruptcy and he had only been a captain in the Prussian army. A penniless refugee, von Steuben hoped to receive a military pension for his service in the American army. He had not, however, exaggerated his talent as a military drillmaster. All spring, the baron could be seen drilling Washington’s troops, alternately shouting in rage and applauding with delight. Washington had little patience with most of the foreign volunteers who joined the American cause, but he considered von Steuben a most unexpected and invaluable surprise.

**Valley Forge** Winter encampment of Washington’s army in Pennsylvania in 1777–1778; because the soldiers suffered greatly from cold and hunger, the term *Valley Forge* has become synonymous with “dire conditions.”

### Baron Friedrich von Steuben

Prussian military officer who served as Washington’s drillmaster at Valley Forge.

## Diplomacy Abroad and Profiteering at Home

- ★ Why did the French assist the Americans secretly in the early years of the war?
- ★ Why did France enter the war after Saratoga?
- ★ How did the French alliance affect the war effort and wartime spending?

Like most wars, the Revolutionary War was not confined to the battlefields. Diplomacy was essential, and popular morale and support had to be sustained for this war, and for any war, to be won. American diplomats hoped to secure supplies, safe harbors for American ships, and if at all possible, formal recognition of independence and the open military assistance that would allow. British diplomats, on the other hand, worked to prevent any formal alliances between European powers and the American rebels. Both sides issued propaganda to ensure continued popular support for the war. General Burgoyne's defeat, and the widening of the war into an international struggle, affected popular morale in both America and Britain.

### The Long Road to Formal Recognition

In 1776 England had many enemies and rivals in Europe who were only too happy to see George III expend his resources and military personnel in an effort to quell a colonial rebellion. Although these nations expected the American Revolution to fail, they were more than eager to keep the conflict going as long as possible.

Before Saratoga, they preferred to keep their support for the Revolution unofficial. Thus, with the help of King Louis XVI's chief minister, the comte de Vergennes, an American entrepreneur named Arthur Lee set up a private commercial firm, supposedly for trading with France. In reality, the firm siphoned weapons and funds from France to the revolutionaries.

The Americans hoped for more, however. In December 1776, Congress sent the printer-politician-scientist **Benjamin Franklin** to Paris in hopes of winning formal recognition of American independence. The charming and witty Franklin was the toast of Paris, adored by aristocrats and common people alike, but even he could not persuade the king to support the Revolution openly. Burgoyne's surrender changed everything. After Saratoga, the British government began scrambling to end a war that had turned embarrassing, and the French government began scrambling to reassess its diplomatic position. Vergennes suspected that the English would quickly send a peace commission to America after Burgoyne's defeat. If the American Congress agreed to a compromise ending the rebellion, France could gain nothing more. But if the French kept the war alive by giving Americans reason to hope for total victory, perhaps they could recoup some of the territory and prestige lost to England in the Seven Years' War. This meant, of course, recognizing the United States and entering a war with Britain. Vergennes knew a choice had to be made—but he was not yet certain what to do.

Meanwhile, the English government was preparing a new peace offer for Congress. At the heart of the British offer were two promises that George III considered to be great concessions. First, Parliament would renounce all intentions of ever taxing the colonies again. Second, the Intolerable Acts, the Tea Act, and any other objectionable legislation passed since 1763 would be repealed. Many members of Parliament thought these overtures were long overdue. They had been vocal critics of their government's policies in the 1760s and 1770s and had refused to support the war. After Burgoyne's defeat, popular support for compromise also increased in England. The Americans, however, were unimpressed by the offers. For Congress, a return to colonial status was now unthinkable.

**Benjamin Franklin** American writer, inventor, scientist, and diplomat instrumental in bringing about a French alliance with the United States in 1778 and who later helped negotiate the treaty ending the war.

Benjamin Franklin knew that Congress would reject the king's offer. But he was too shrewd to relieve the comte de Vergennes's fear that a compromise was in the works. Franklin warned that France must act quickly and decisively or accept the consequences. His gamble worked, and in 1778 France and the United States signed a treaty. The pact linked French and American fates tightly together, for under its provisions neither country could make a separate peace with Great Britain. By 1779, Spain had also formally acknowledged the United States, and in 1780 the Netherlands did so too. George III had little choice but to declare war against these European nations.

The Revolution had grown into an international struggle that taxed British resources further and made it impossible for Britain to concentrate all its military might and naval power in America. With ships diverted to the Caribbean and to the European coast, Britain could no longer blockade American ports as effectively as before or transport troops to the American mainland as quickly. Above all, the entry of the French into the war opened new strategic possibilities for Washington and his army. If the Americans could count on the cooperation of the French fleet, a British army could be trapped on American soil, cut off by French ships from supplies, reinforcements, and any chance of escape.

### War and the American Public

**cheap money** Paper money that is readily available but has declined in value.

**black market** The illegal business of buying and selling goods that are banned or restricted.

News of the alliance with France helped release an orgy of spending and purchasing by American civilians. The conditions were ripe for such a spree in 1778. With the value of government-issued paper money dropping steadily, spending

made more sense than saving. And with profits soaring from the sale of supplies to the army, many Americans had more money to spend than ever before. Also, not all of the credit that diplomats had negotiated with European allies went toward military supplies. Some of it was available for the purchase of manufactured goods. This combination of optimism, **cheap money**, and plentiful foreign goods led to a wartime spending bonanza.

Many of the goods that were imported into America in the next few years were actually British-made. American consumers apparently saw no contradiction between their strong patriotism and the purchase of enemy products. A **black market**—a network for the sale of illegally imported English goods—grew rapidly, and profits from it skyrocketed. Abandoning the commitment to “virtuous simplicity” that had led them to dress in homespun, Americans stampeded to purchase tea and other imported luxuries.

Popular optimism and the spending frenzy unleashed by the French treaty contrasted sharply with the financial realities facing Congress. Bluntly put, the government was broke. By 1778, both Congress and the states had exhausted their meager sources of hard currency. The government met the crisis by printing more paper money. The result was rampant inflation. The value of the “continental,” as the congressional paper money was called, dropped steadily with each passing day. The government’s inability to pay soldiers became widely known—and enlistments plummeted as mutiny and desertion increased. Officers did not know whether to sympathize with their unpaid and involuntary soldiers or to enforce stricter discipline upon them. Some officers executed deserters or mutineers; some ordered the men whipped. And some pardoned their men, despite the severity of their crimes. Congress acknowledged the justice of the soldiers’ complaints by giving them pay raises in the form of certificates that they could redeem—after the war.

## From Stalemate to Victory

- ★ What did France hope to achieve by coming to the aid of the struggling American army?
- ★ What led to General Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown?
- ★ What were the most important results of the peace treaty negotiations?

The French presence in the war did not immediately alter the strategies of British or American military leaders. English generals in the North displayed caution after Burgoyne's surrender, and Washington waited impatiently for signs that the French fleet would come to his aid. The result was a stalemate. The active war shifted to the South once again in late 1778 as the British mounted a second major campaign in the Carolinas.

### The War Stalls in the North

**Sir Henry Clinton**, now the commander of the British army in North America, knew that the French fleet could easily blockade the Delaware River and cut off supplies to occupied Philadelphia. So, by the time warm weather had set in, his

army was on the march, heading east through New Jersey en route to New York. Clinton's slow-moving caravan, burdened by a long train of bulky supply wagons, made an irresistible target—and Washington decided to strike.

Unfortunately, Washington entrusted the unreliable **General Charles Lee** with the initial attack. Lee marched his men to Monmouth, New Jersey, and as the British approached, the Americans opened fire. Yet, as soon as the British army began to return fire, Lee ordered his men to retreat. When Washington arrived on the scene, the Americans were fleeing and the British troops were closing in.

Washington rallied the retreating Americans, calling on them to re-form their lines and stand their ground. Trained by von Steuben, the men responded well. They moved forward with precision and speed, driving the redcoats back. The **Battle of Monmouth** was not the decisive victory Washington had dreamed of, but it was a fine recovery from what first appeared to be certain defeat. As for Lee, Washington saw to it that he was discharged from the army.

Throughout the fall and winter of 1778, Washington waited in vain for French naval support for a major campaign. Early news coming from the western front did little to improve Washington's bleak mood. In Kentucky and western Virginia, deadly Indian attacks had decimated many American settlements. The driving force behind these attacks was a remarkable British official named Harry Hamilton, who had won the nickname "Hair Buyer" because of the bounties he paid for American scalps. In October, Hamilton led Indian troops from the Great Lakes tribes into the Illinois-Indiana region and captured the fort at Vincennes. The American counterattack was organized by a stocky young frontiersman, **George Rogers Clark**, whose own enthusiasm for scalping earned him the nickname "Long-Knife." To Washington's relief, Clark and his volunteer forces managed to drive the British from Vincennes.

Border conflict with Britain's Indian allies remained a major problem, and when loyalist troops joined these Indians, the danger increased. So did the atrocities. When patriot General John Sullivan's regular army was badly defeated by Mohawk chief **Thayendanegea**, known to the Americans as Joseph Brant, and local loyalists, Sullivan took revenge by burning forty Indian villages. It was an act of violence and cruelty that deeply shocked and shamed General Washington.

**Sir Henry Clinton** General who replaced William Howe as commander of the British forces in America in 1778 after the British surrender at Saratoga.

**General Charles Lee** Revolutionary general who tried to undermine Washington's authority on several occasions; he was eventually dismissed from the military.

**Battle of Monmouth** New Jersey battle in June 1778 in which Charles Lee wasted a decisive American advantage.

**George Rogers Clark** Virginian who led his troops to successes against the British and Indians in the Ohio Territory in 1778.

**Thayendanegea** Mohawk chief known to the Americans as Joseph Brant; his combined forces of loyalists and Indians defeated John Sullivan's expedition to upstate New York in 1779.

Mohawk chief Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant) believed that Iroquois lands would be lost if the Americans were victorious. He urged an Iroquois alliance with the British, fought for the British, and directed a series of deadly raids against settlements in New York. After the war his people were forced to relocate to Canada. American School/Private Collection/Peter Newark American Pictures/The Bridgeman Art Library.



Spring and summer of 1779 passed and still Washington waited for the French navy's cooperation. Fall brought the general the worst possible news: Admiral D'Estaing and his fleet had sailed for the West Indies under orders to protect valuable French possessions in the Caribbean and, if possible, to seize English possessions there. News of D'Estaing's departure spurred a new wave of discipline problems among Washington's idle troops. Mutinies and desertions increased. From his winter headquarters in Morristown Heights, New Jersey, Washington wrote to von Steuben: "The prospect, my dear Baron, is gloomy, and the storm thickens." The real storm, however, was raging not in New Jersey but in the Carolinas.

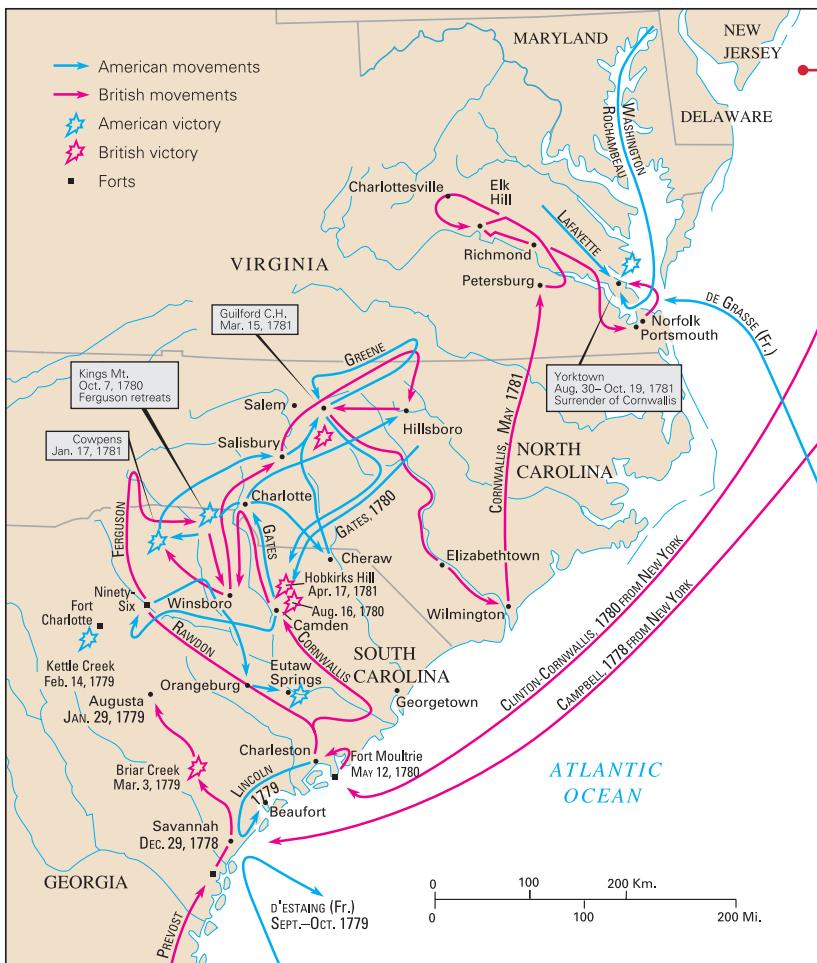
### The Second Carolinas Campaign

Since the fall of 1778, the British had been siphoning off New York-based troops for a new invasion of the South. The campaign began in earnest with the capture of Savannah, Georgia (see Map 6.2). Then, in the winter of 1779, General Henry

Clinton sailed for Charleston, South Carolina, eager to avenge his embarrassing retreat in the 1776 campaign. Five thousand Continental soldiers hurried to join the South Carolina militia in defense of the city. From the Citadel, a fortification spanning the northern neck of the city's peninsula, these American forces bombarded the British with all they could find, firing projectiles made of glass, broken shovels, hatchets, and pickaxes. From aboard their ships, the British answered with a steady stream of mortar shells. On May 12, 1780, after months of deadly bombardment and high casualties on both sides, the Citadel fell. The American commander, General Benjamin Lincoln, surrendered his entire army to the British, and a satisfied General Clinton returned to New York.

Clinton left the southern campaign in the hands of **Charles Cornwallis**, an able general who set out with more than eight thousand men to conquer the rest of South Carolina. Cornwallis and his regular army were joined by loyalist troops who were as

**Charles Cornwallis** British general who was second in command to Henry Clinton; his surrender at Yorktown in 1781 brought the Revolution to a close.



**MAP 6.2** The Second Southern Campaign, 1778–1781

This map of the second attempt by Britain to crush the rebellion in the South shows the many battles waged in the Lower South before Cornwallis's encampment at Yorktown and his surrender there. This decisive southern campaign involved all the military resources of the combatants, including British, loyalist, French, and American ground forces and British and French naval fleets.

eager to take their revenge on their enemies as Clinton had been. Since the British had abandoned the South in 1776, small, roving bands of loyalist guerrillas had kept resistance to the Revolution alive. The guerrillas increased their attacks after the British victory at Charleston, and a bloody civil war of ambush, arson, and brutality on both sides resulted. By the summer of 1780, fortunes had reversed: the revolutionaries were now the resistance, and the loyalists were in control.

The revolutionary resistance produced legendary guerrilla leaders, including **Francis Marion**, known as the “Swamp Fox.” Marion organized recruits into raiding bands that steadily harassed Cornwallis’s army and effectively cut British lines of communication between Charleston and the interior. Although Marion did his best to trouble the British, Thomas Sumter’s guerrillas and other resistance forces focused their energies on the loyalists. When these guerrillas and loyalists met head-on in battle, they honored few of the rules of war. In October 1780, for example, in the **Battle of King’s Mountain**, revolutionaries surrounded loyalist troops and picked them off one by one. As this bitter civil war continued, marauding bands terrorized civilians and plundered their farms. The worst damage was often done by outlaws posing as soldiers.

The regular American army, under the command of the Saratoga hero, Gates, had little success against Cornwallis. In August 1780, Gates and his men suffered a crushing

**Francis Marion** South Carolina leader of guerrilla forces during the war; known as the “Swamp Fox,” he harassed British forces during the second southern campaign.

**Battle of King’s Mountain** Battle fought in October 1780 on the border between the Carolinas in which revolutionary troops defeated loyalists.

**Nathanael Greene** American general who took command of the Carolinas campaign in 1780.

defeat at Camden, South Carolina. That fall, Washington wisely replaced Gates with a younger, more energetic officer from Rhode Island, **Nathanael Greene**. The fourteen hundred Continental soldiers Greene found when he arrived in South Carolina were tired, hungry, and clothed in rags. Greene's first steps were to ease the strains caused by civil war, raids, and plundering by offering pardons to loyalists and proposing alliances with local Indian tribes. In the end, Greene managed to win over all but the Creeks from the British.

Greene's military strategy was attrition: wear the British out by making them chase his small army across the South. He sent Virginian Daniel Morgan and six hundred riflemen to western South Carolina to tempt troops under the command of Banastre Tarleton into pursuit. Tarleton finally caught up with Morgan on an open meadow called the Cowpens in January 1781. When the outnumbered Americans stood their ground, ready to fight, the tired and frustrated British soldiers panicked and fled. Annoyed by this turn of events, Cornwallis decided to take the offensive. Now it was Greene's turn to lead the British on a long, exhausting chase. In March 1781, the two armies finally met at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina. Although the Americans lost the battle and withdrew, British losses were so great that Cornwallis had to rethink the southern campaign. He decided that the price of conquering the Lower South was more than he was willing to pay. Disgusted, Cornwallis ordered his army northward to Virginia. Perhaps, he mused, he would have better luck there.

**West Point** Site of a fort overlooking the Hudson River, north of New York City.

### Treason and Triumph

In the fall of 1780, the popular general Benedict Arnold, one of Washington's protégés, defected to the British. Although Arnold's bold plot to turn over control of the Hudson River by surrendering the fort at **West Point**, New York, to the British was foiled, Arnold's treason saddened Washington and damaged American morale. Washington's unhappiness over Arnold's betrayal was eased the following spring, however, when news came that French help was at last on its way. The general sat down at a strategy session with his French counterpart, General Rochambeau, in May 1781. The results were not exactly what Washington had hoped for: he had pressed for an attack on British-occupied New York, whereas Rochambeau insisted on a move against Cornwallis in Virginia. The French general had already ordered Admiral de Grasse and his fleet to the Chesapeake, so Washington had little choice but to concur.

On July 6, 1781, a French army joined Washington's Continental forces just north of Manhattan for the long march to Virginia. As yet, the British commander was unaware that a combined army was marching toward him. His first clue that trouble lay ahead came when a force of regular soldiers, led by von Steuben and the marquis de Lafayette, appeared in Virginia. Soon afterward, Cornwallis moved his army to the peninsula port of Yorktown to prepare for more serious battles ahead. The choice of **Yorktown** was one he would heartily regret.

By September 1781, the French and American troops coming from New York had joined forces with von Steuben and Lafayette's men. Admiral de Grasse's fleet of twenty-seven ships and an additional three thousand French soldiers were in place in Chesapeake Bay. Clinton, still in New York, had been devastatingly slow to realize what the enemy intended. In desperation, he now sent a naval squadron from New York to rescue the trapped Cornwallis. He could do little more, since most of the British fleet was in the Caribbean.

Admiral de Grasse had no trouble fending off Clinton's rescue squadron. Then he turned his naval guns on the redcoats at Yorktown. From his siege positions on land,

**Yorktown** Site of the last major battle of the Revolution; American and French troops trapped Cornwallis's army here, on a peninsula on the York River near the Chesapeake Bay, and forced him to surrender.



John Trumbull celebrates the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in this painting. However, neither Cornwallis nor Washington actually participated in the surrender ceremonies. The British commander claimed illness and sent his general of the guards as his deputy. Washington, always sensitive to status as well as to protocol, promptly appointed an officer of equal rank to serve as his deputy. "Surrender of Lord Cornwallis" by John Trumbull. Yale University Art Gallery/Art Resource, NY.

Washington also directed a steady barrage of artillery fire against the British, producing a deafening roar both day and night. The noise dazed the redcoats and prevented them from sleeping. On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis admitted the hopelessness of his situation and surrendered. Despite the stunning turn of events at Yorktown, fighting continued in some areas. Bloody warfare against the Indians also meant more deaths along the frontier. The British occupation of Charleston, Savannah, and New York continued. But after Yorktown the British gave up all hope of military victory against their former colonies. On March 4, 1782, Parliament voted to cease "the further prosecution of offensive war on the Continent of North America." The war for independence had been won.

### Winning Diplomatic Independence

What Washington and his French allies had won, American diplomats had to preserve. Three men represented the United States at the peace talks in Paris: Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay. At first glance, this was an odd trio. The elderly Franklin, witty and sophisticated, had spent most of the war years in Paris, where he earned a deserved reputation as an admirer of women and wines. Adams—competitive, self-absorbed, and socially inept—did not hide his distaste for Franklin's flamboyance. Neither man found much comfort in the presence of the prudish, aristocratic John Jay of New York. Yet they proved to be a highly effective combination. Franklin brought a crafty skill and a love of strategy to the team as well as a useful knowledge of French politics.

Adams provided the backbone, for in the face of any odds he was a stubborn watchdog of American interests. Jay was calm, deliberate, and though not as aggressive as his New England colleague, he matched Adams in patriotism and integrity.

European political leaders expected the Americans to fare badly against the more experienced British and French diplomats. But Franklin, Jay, and Adams were far from naive. They were all veterans of wartime negotiations with European governments, having pursued loans, supplies, and military support. And they understood what was at stake at the peace table. They knew that their chief ally, France, had its own agenda and that Britain still wavered on the degree of independence America had actually won at Yorktown. Thus, despite firm orders from Congress to rely on France at every phase of the negotiations, the American diplomats quickly put their own agenda on the table. They demanded that Britain formally recognize American independence as a precondition to any negotiations. The British commissioner reluctantly agreed. Even so, negotiations continued for more than a year.

**Treaty of Paris of 1783** Treaty that ended the Revolutionary War in 1783 and secured American independence.

In the **Treaty of Paris of 1783**, the Americans emerged with two clear victories. First, although the British did not give up Canada as the Americans had hoped, the boundaries of the new nation were extensive. Second, the treaty granted the United States unlimited access to the fisheries off Newfoundland, a particular concern of New Englander Adams. It was difficult to measure the degree of success on other issues, however, because the terms for carrying out the agreements were often vague. For example, Britain ceded the Northwest to the United States. But the treaty said nothing about approval of this transfer of power by the Indians of the region and failed to set a timetable for British evacuation of the forts in the territory. In some cases, however, the treaty's vague language worked to American advantage. The treaty contained only the most general promise that the American government would not interfere with collection of the large prewar debts southern planters owed to British merchants. The promise to urge the states to return confiscated property to loyalists was equally inexact.

## Republican Expectations in a New Nation

- ★ **How did the Revolution affect Americans' expectations regarding individual rights, social equality, and the role of women in American society?**
- ★ **What opportunities were open to African Americans during and after the Revolution?**
- ★ **What was the fate of the loyalists?**

As an old man, John Adams reminisced about the American Revolution with his family and friends. Although he spoke of the war as a remarkable military event, Adams insisted that the Revolution was more than battlefield victories and defeats. The Revolution took place, Adams said, “in the hearts and the minds of the people.” What he meant was that changes in American social values and political ideas were as critical as battlefield strategies in creating the new nation. “The people” were, of course, far more diverse than Adams was ever willing to admit. Race, region, social class, gender, religion, even the national origin of immigrants—all played a part in creating diverse interests and diverse interpretations of the Revolution. Adams was correct, however, that significant changes took place in American thought during the war and the years immediately after. Many of these changes reflected a growing identification of the new American nation as a **republic** that ensured not only representative government but also the protection of individual rights, an educated citizenry, and an expanded suffrage.

**republic** A nation in which supreme power resides in the citizens, who elect representatives to govern them.

### The Protection of Fundamental Rights

The Declaration of Independence expressed the commonly held American view that government must protect the fundamental rights of life, liberty, property, and, as Jefferson put it, “the pursuit of happiness.” The belief that Britain was usurping these rights was a major justification for the Revolution. Thus, whatever form Americans chose for their new, independent government, they were certain to demand the protection of these fundamental rights. This emphasis had many social consequences.

The protection of many individual rights—freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, and the right to a trial by jury—were written into the new constitutions of several states. But some rights were more difficult to define than others. Although many Americans supported “freedom of conscience,” not all of them supported separation of church and state. In the seventeenth century, individual dissenters such as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson had fought for the separation of church and state. After the Great Awakening, the same demands were made by organized dissenter communities such as the Baptists, who protested the privileges that established churches enjoyed in most colonies. When Virginia took up the question in 1776, political leaders were not in agreement. The House of Burgesses approved George Mason’s Declaration of Rights, which guaranteed its citizens “the free exercise of religion,” yet Virginia continued to use tax monies to support the Anglican Church. Even with the strong support of Thomas Jefferson, dissenters’ demands were not fully met until 1786, when the Statute of Religious Freedom ended tax-supported churches and guaranteed complete freedom of conscience, even for atheists. Other southern states followed Virginia’s lead, ending tax support for their Anglican churches.

The battle was more heated in New England. Many descendants of the Puritans wished to continue government support of the Congregational Church. Others simply wished to keep alive the principle of an established church. As a compromise, communities were sometimes allowed to decide which local church received their tax money, although each town was required to make one church the established church. New England did not separate church and state entirely until the nineteenth century.

Members of the revolutionary generation who had a political voice were especially vocal about the importance of private property and protection of a citizen’s right to own property. The property rights of some citizens infringed on the freedoms of others, however. Claims made on western lands by white Americans often meant the denial of Indian rights to that land. In the white community, a man’s property rights usually included the restriction of his wife’s right to own or sell land, slaves, and even her own personal possessions. Even Deborah Sampson lost her right to own property when she became Mrs. Gannett. And the institution of slavery transformed human beings into the private property of others.

### Legal Reforms

Although economic inequality actually grew in the decades after the Revolution, several legal reforms were spurred by a commitment to the republican belief in social equality. Chief targets of this legal reform included the laws of **primogeniture** and **entail**.

In Britain, these inheritance laws had led to the creation of a landed aristocracy. The actual threat they posed in America was small, for few planters ever adopted them. But the principle they represented remained important to republican spokesmen such as Thomas Jefferson, who pressed successfully for their abolition in Virginia and North Carolina.

In some states, the principle of social equality had concrete political consequences. Pennsylvania and Georgia eliminated all property qualifications for voting among free white males. Other states lowered their property requirements for voters but refused to

**primogeniture** The legal right of the eldest son to inherit the entire estate of his father.

**entail** A legal limitation that prevents property from being divided, sold, or given away.

In this portrait of Mary Harvey Champneys and her stepdaughter, Sarah Champneys, the two women pose in the respectable attire of a matron and an unmarried girl. The artist, Edward Savage, began his career making copies of paintings by more notable artists such as John Singleton Copley, but later managed to earn his living as a portraitist. In an era without photography, family portraits served as memorials as well as a display of wealth. Mary Harvey Champneys (ca. 1752–1800) and her Stepdaughter, Sarah Champneys, by Edward Savage (American, 1761–1817) Oil on canvas, Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association, 1937.02.02.



go as far as universal white manhood suffrage. They feared that the outcome of such a sweeping reform was unpredictable—even women might demand a political voice.

### Women in the New Republic

The war did not erase differences of class, race, region, or age for either men or women. Its impact was not uniform for all American women. Yet some experiences, and the memories of them, were probably shared by the majority of white, and even many black, women. They would remember the war years as a time of constant shortages, anxiety, and unfamiliar and difficult responsibilities. Men going off to war left women to manage farms and shops in addition to caring for large families and household duties. Women had to cope with the critical shortages of food and supplies and to survive on meager budgets in inflationary times. Many, like the woman who pleaded with her soldier husband to “pray come home,” may have feared they would fail in these new circumstances. After the war, however, many remembered with satisfaction how well they had adapted to new roles. They expressed their sense of accomplishment in letters to husbands that no longer spoke of “your farm” and “your crop” but of “our farm” and even “my crop.”

For women, just as for men, the war meant adapting traditional behavior and skills to new circumstances. Women who followed the eighteenth-century custom of joining husbands or fathers in army camps took up the familiar domestic chores of cooking, cleaning, laundering, and providing nursing care. Outside the army camps, loyalist and patriot women served as spies or saboteurs and risked their lives by sheltering soldiers or hiding weapons in their cellars. Sometimes they opted to burn their crops or destroy their homes to prevent the enemy from using them. These were conscious acts of patriotism rather than wifely duties. On some occasions, women crossed gender boundaries dramatically. Although few behaved like Deborah Sampson and disguised themselves as men, women such as **Mary Ludwig** and Margaret Corbin did engage in military combat. These “Molly Pitchers” carried water to cool down the cannon in American forts across the country; but if men fell wounded, nearby women frequently took their place in line. After the war, female veterans of combat, including Corbin, applied to the government for pensions, citing as evidence the wounds they had received in battle.

In the postwar years, members of America’s political and social elite engaged in a public discussion of women’s role in the family and in a republican society. Spurred by Enlightenment assertions that all humans were capable of rational thought and action and by the empirical evidence of women’s patriotic commitments and behavior, these Americans set aside older colonial notions that women lacked the ability to reason and to make moral choices. They urged a new role for women within the family: the moral training of their children. This training would include the inculcating of patriotism and republican principles. Thus the republic would rely on wives and mothers to sustain its values and to raise a new generation of concerned citizens.

This new ideal, “**republican womanhood**,” reflected Enlightenment ideals, but it also had roots in economic and social changes that began before the Revolution, including the growth of a prosperous urban class able to purchase many household necessities. No longer needing to make cloth or candles or butter, prosperous urban wives and mothers had time to devote to raising children. Republican womanhood probably had little immediate impact in the lives of ordinary free women, who remained unable to purchase essential goods or to pay others to do household chores, or in the lives of African American or Indian women.

Although American republicanism expected mothers to instill patriotism in their children, it also expected communities to provide formal education for future citizens. Arguing that a citizen could not be both “ignorant and free,” several states allotted tax money for public elementary schools. Some went even further. By 1789, for example, Massachusetts required every town to provide free public education to its children. After the Revolution, *children* meant girls as well as boys.

This new emphasis on female education was a radical departure for women. Before the Revolution, the education of daughters was haphazard at best. Colleges and the preparatory schools that trained young men for college were closed to female students. A woman got what formal knowledge she could by reading her father’s books. Some women, most notably the Massachusetts revolutionary propagandist Mercy Otis Warren, were lucky enough to receive fine educations from the men in their family. But most women had to be content to learn domestic skills rather than geography, philosophy, or history. After the Revolution, however, educational reformers reasoned that mothers must be well versed in history and even political theory if they were to teach their children the essential principles of citizenship. By the 1780s, private academies had opened to educate the daughters of wealthy American families. These privileged young women enjoyed the rare opportunity to study mathematics and history. Although their curriculum was

**Mary Ludwig** Wife of a soldier at Fort Monmouth; one of many women known popularly as “Molly Pitchers” because they carried water to cool down the cannon their husbands fired in battle.

**republican womanhood** A role for mothers that became popularized following the Revolution; it stressed women’s importance in instructing children in republican virtues such as patriotism and honor.

# Investigating America

## Esther DeBerdt Reed on the Usefulness of Women, 1780

During the Revolution, many women expanded the boundaries of their traditional sphere by organizing to assist in the war effort. Wealthy Philadelphia matron Esther DeBerdt Reed helped organize voluntary associations to raise funds and supplies for the American army. The community did not always greet openly political activities by women favorably, however. Women who expressed their patriotism through public actions were accused of overstepping the boundaries of their gender—that is, of unfeminine behavior. Reed defended her activism in "The Sentiments of an American Woman," printed in 1780. In the following passage from this unusual document, she connected the patriotic women of the Revolution with heroic women of history.

.....

**O**n the commencement of actual war, the Women of America manifested a firm resolution to contribute as much as could depend on them, to the deliverance of this country. Animated by the purest patriotism they are sensible of sorrow at this day, in not offering more than barren wishes for the success of so glorious a Revolution. They aspire to render themselves more really useful; and this sentiment is universal from the north to the south of the Thirteen United States. Our ambition is kindled by the fame of those heroines of antiquity, who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good. I glory in all that which my sex has done great and commendable. I call to mind with enthusiasm and with admiration, all those acts of courage, of constancy and patriotism, which history has

transmitted to us: The people favoured by Heaven, preserved from destruction by the virtues, the zeal and the resolution of Deborah, of Judith, of Esther! . . . Rome saved from the fury of a victorious enemy by the efforts of Volunia, and other Roman ladies: So many famous sieges where the Women have been seen forgetting the weakness of their sex, building new walls, digging trenches with their feeble hands; furnishing arms to their defenders, they themselves darting the missile weapons on the enemy, resigning the adornments of their apparel, and their fortunes to fill the public treasury, and to hasten the deliverance of their country. . . . [We are] Born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government. . . . Who knows if persons disposed to censure, and sometimes too severely with regard to us, may not disapprove our appearing acquainted even with the actions of which our sex boasts? We are at least certain, that he cannot be a good citizen who will not applaud our efforts for the relief of the armies which defend our lives, our possessions, our liberty.

.....

- Do you think Reed was challenging the notion that women are constitutionally, or naturally, weak and incapable of making decisions and acting on them? Or was she saying that women are decisive and competent only in times of great crisis?
- Male revolutionaries often drew analogies between their choices and actions and those of biblical heroes and leaders of the Roman republic. Why do you think Reed referred to the women of the Bible and Ancient Rome?
- If you were opposed to the activities Reed was engaged in, what arguments would you make against this type of female activism?



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often as rigorous as that in a boys' preparatory school, the addition of courses in fancy needlework reminded the girls that their futures lay in marriage and motherhood.

### The War's Impact on Slaves and Slavery

and military loyalties reflected their best guess as to which side offered them the greatest

The protection of liberty and the fear of enslavement were major themes of the Revolution. Yet the denial of liberty was a central reality in the lives of most African Americans. As the movement for independence developed, slaves' political



# It Matters Today

## TRACKING CHANGES IN GENDER ROLES

Eighteenth-century women like Deborah Sampson and Esther DeBerdt Reed tested the limits of traditional gender roles, demonstrating bravery on the battlefield and political organizing skills during the American Revolution. But it would be over 140 years before their descendants could vote in a national election and decades more before they could serve in the military. The impact of this social change can be seen today in the accomplishments of women such as Lt. General Claudia J. Kennedy, the United States Army's first female

three-star general; Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to become a Supreme Court justice; and Madeleine Albright, the first woman secretary of state. Tracking major changes in gender roles and examining why those changes occurred is a critical part of the historian's task.

- Do you think a woman president is likely to be elected in your lifetime? Explain the factors on which you base your opinion.

chance of freedom. Ironically, the desire for freedom set many of them against the Revolution. Of the fifty thousand or so slaves who won their freedom in the war, half did so by escaping to the British army. Only about five thousand African American men joined the Continental Army once Congress opened enlistment to them in 1776, and most of those came from northern states with small black populations. Black soldiers were generally better treated by the British than by the revolutionaries.

With American victory in 1781, African American loyalist soldiers faced a difficult decision: to remain in America and risk re-enslavement or to evacuate along with the British army. Many stayed, prompting a group of angry owners to complain that there was "reason to believe that a great number of slaves which were taken by the British army are now passing in this country as free men." The British transported those who chose to leave to Canada, to England, to British Florida, to the Caribbean, or to Africa. Three thousand former slaves settled initially in Nova Scotia, but the racism of their white loyalist neighbors led more than a thousand of these veterans to emigrate a second time. Led by an African-born former slave named Thomas Peters, they sailed to Sierra Leone, in West Africa, where they established a free black colony. The long war affected the lives of those who remained in slavery. Control and discipline broke down when the southern campaigns dragged on, distracting slave owners and disrupting work routines. Slave masters complained loudly and bitterly that their slaves "all do now what they please every where" and "pay no attention to the orders of the overseer." These exaggerated complaints point to real but temporary opportunities for slaves to alter the conditions under which they worked and lived.

In the northern states, the revolutionaries' demand for liberty undermined black slavery. Loyalists taunted patriots, asking, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" The question made the contradiction between revolutionary ideals and American reality painfully clear. Not all slave owners, however, needed to be shamed by others into grappling with the hypocrisy of their position. In the 1760s and 1770s, influential political leaders such as James Otis, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Rush campaigned against the continuation of slavery. In Boston, Phillis Wheatley, a young African-born slave whose master recognized and encouraged her literary talents, called on the revolutionaries to acknowledge the universality of the wish for freedom. "In every human breast," Wheatley wrote, "God had implanted a Principle, which we call love of freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance."

# Investigating America

## George Washington on Black Loyalists, 1783

During the war, General Washington lost a number of slaves to the British when Lord Dunmore sailed up the Potomac River. One of them, an African whom the general had renamed Harry Washington, fought with the loyalists and rose to the rank of corporal in the British army. The end of fighting found him in British-occupied New York City, and his fate rested with Sir Guy Carleton, who was responsible for negotiating the evacuation of the city. In this letter of May 6, 1783, George Washington made it clear to Carleton that the Americans wanted their property returned to them, including runaway slaves.

.....

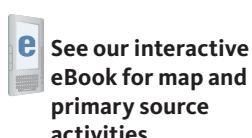
Sir: In my Letter of the 21st of April, I enclosed to your Excellency a Copy of a Resolution of Congress of the 15th, instructing me in three points, which appeared necessary for carrying into Effect the Terms of the Treaty between G B. and the United States of America; and informed you that such part as rested upon my Decision and which regarded the Release of prisoners, had been determined and was then ordered to be carried into Execution. Upon the other two points, as they respected the Receive possession of the Posts in Occupation of the British Troops and the carrying away any Negroes or other Property of the American Inhabitants, and both being within your Controul, I had the Honor to propose a personal Interview with your Excellency; that the subject might be freely discussed, and that measures might be agreed upon for carrying into Execution those Points of the 7th Article of Treaty, agreeable to their true Intent and Spirit....

Respecting the other point of Discussion, in addition to what I mentioned in my Communication of the 21st ulto. I took occasion, in our Conference to inform Your Excellency,

that in Consequence of your Letter of the 14th. of April to R R Livingston Esqr, Congress had been pleased to make a further Reference to me, of that Letter, and had directed me to take such Measures as should be found necessary for carrying into Effect the several Matters mentioned by you therein. In the Course of our Conversation on this point, I was surprized to hear you mention, that an Embarkation had already taken place, in which a large Number of Negroes had been carried away. Whether this Conduct is consonant to, or how far it may be deemed an Infraction of the Treaty, is not for me to decide. I cannot however conceal from your Excellency that my private opinion is, that the measure is totally different from the Letter and Spirit of the Treaty. But waving the Discussing of the point, and leaving its decision to our respective Sovereigns, I find it my Duty to signify my Readiness, in Conjunction with your Excellency, to enter into any Agreements, or take any Measures which may be deemed expedient to prevent the future Carrying away any Negroes or other property of the American can Inhabitants.

.....

- What does Washington's demand—to which Carleton refused to agree—suggest about the limits to American claims of liberty and democracy?
- Roughly three-quarters of the Africans and African Americans who bore arms during the war fought with the British. How does that complicate Washington's claim, made elsewhere, that the British were "the enemy" of freedom?
- How did Harry's actions help to weaken slavery in the country he was about to leave behind?



**manumission** Freedom from slavery or bondage.

Free black Americans joined with white reformers to mobilize antislavery campaigns in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. In Boston and Philadelphia, slaves petitioned on their own behalf to be "liberated from a state of Bondage, and made Freemen of this Community." Of course, these states were home to few slaves, and the regional economy did not depend on unfree labor. Thus it was easier there to acknowledge the truth in the slave's cry: "We have no property! We have no country!"

**Manumission** increased during the 1770s, especially in the North. In 1780, Pennsylvania became the first state to pass an emancipation statute, making manumission a public policy rather than a private matter of conscience. Pennsylvania lawmakers,

however, compromised on a gradual rather than an immediate end to slavery. Only slaves born after the law was enacted were eligible, and they could not expect to receive their freedom until they had served a twenty-eight-year term of indenture. By 1804, all northern states had committed themselves to a slow end to slavery.

Slavery was far more deeply embedded in the South, as a labor system and as a system that regulated race relations. In the Lower South, white Americans ignored the debate over slavery and took immediate steps to replace missing slaves and to restore tight control over work and life on their plantations. But individual manumissions did occur in the Upper South. Free black communities grew in both Maryland and Virginia after the Revolutionary War, and planters openly debated the morality of slavery in a republic and the practical benefits of slave labor. They did not all reach the same conclusions. George Washington freed all his slaves on the death of his wife, but Patrick Henry, who had often stirred his fellow Virginia legislators with his spirited defense of American liberty, justified his decision to continue slavery with blunt honesty. Freeing his slaves, he said, would be inconvenient.

## Summary

When the colonies declared their independence, many people on both sides doubted they could win the war. The British outnumbered and outgunned the Americans, and their troops were better trained and better equipped. The Americans' major advantage was logistic: they were fighting a war on familiar terrain. And Washington's hit-and-run tactics made it impossible for the British to deliver a crushing blow.

The turning point in the war came in 1777 when British general John Burgoyne's plan to isolate New England from the other rebel colonies failed. Burgoyne was forced to surrender at Saratoga, New York. The surprising American victory led to an alliance between France and the United States and the expansion of the war into an international conflict. The British invaded the South again in 1778, but despite early victories, their campaign ended in disaster. American victory was assured when French and American forces defeated Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, in October 1781. Fighting continued for a time, but in March 1782, the British Parliament ended

the conflict. The Treaty of Paris was negotiated in 1783, and to the surprise of many European diplomats, the Americans gained important concessions.

Victory led to significant transformations in American society. Individual rights were strengthened for free white men. A republican spirit changed the outlook, if not the condition, of many Americans, as customs that fit a hierarchical society gave way to more egalitarian behavior. The wartime experiences of women such as Deborah Sampson led American intellectuals to reconsider women's "nature" and their abilities. Although full citizenship was not granted, white women's capacity for rational thought was acknowledged, and their new role as the educators of their children led to expanded formal education for women. Black Americans also made some gains. Fifty thousand slaves won their freedom during the war, thousands by serving in the Continental Army. Northern states moved to outlaw slavery, but southern slaveholders decided to preserve the institution despite intense debate.

## Key Terms

- |                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Thomas Gage, <i>p.</i> 124           | Valley Forge, <i>p.</i> 130                | Battle of King's Mountain, <i>p.</i> 135 |
| militiamen, <i>p.</i> 125            | Baron Friedrich von Steuben, <i>p.</i> 130 | Nathanael Greene, <i>p.</i> 136          |
| Benedict Arnold, <i>p.</i> 125       | Benjamin Franklin, <i>p.</i> 131           | West Point, <i>p.</i> 136                |
| amnesty, <i>p.</i> 125               | cheap money, <i>p.</i> 132                 | Yorktown, <i>p.</i> 136                  |
| William Howe, <i>p.</i> 125          | black market, <i>p.</i> 132                | Treaty of Paris of 1783, <i>p.</i> 138   |
| Battle of Bunker Hill, <i>p.</i> 126 | Sir Henry Clinton, <i>p.</i> 133           | republic, <i>p.</i> 138                  |
| George Washington, <i>p.</i> 126     | General Charles Lee, <i>p.</i> 133         | primogeniture, <i>p.</i> 139             |
| Richard Howe, <i>p.</i> 126          | Battle of Monmouth, <i>p.</i> 133          | entail, <i>p.</i> 139                    |
| Hessian troops, <i>p.</i> 126        | George Rogers Clark, <i>p.</i> 133         | Mary Ludwig, <i>p.</i> 141               |
| Battle of Trenton, <i>p.</i> 128     | Thayendanegea, <i>p.</i> 133               | republican womanhood, <i>p.</i> 141      |
| John Burgoyne, <i>p.</i> 128         | Charles Cornwallis, <i>p.</i> 134          | manumission, <i>p.</i> 141               |
| Horatio Gates, <i>p.</i> 129         | Francis Marion, <i>p.</i> 135              |  |



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# Competing Visions of the Virtuous Republic

## 1770–1796

## CHAPTER 7

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Mercy Otis Warren

Mercy Otis Warren was the sister of one Massachusetts revolutionary and the wife of another. But she was a revolutionary in her own right. She never held elective office or donned a uniform to fight for independence, for these were male roles in the eighteenth century. Instead, she waged her revolution with pen and paper. During the 1770s, she wrote biting satirical plays that mocked royal officials and their supporters. In *The Adulateur* and *The Group*, she drew the imperial struggle in stark moral terms as a battle between tyranny and representative government, and between ambitions and virtue. Patriots like John Adams praised her as an effective propagandist for the revolutionary cause.

After the Revolution, however, Warren and Adams became political enemies. He believed the country needed a powerful federal government, but Warren continued to believe in local self-rule. When the Constitution was proposed, Warren, like the document's other opponents, argued that a central government with taxing powers was the first step toward re-creating the tyranny of the British king.

Warren never changed her mind. In 1805 she published the first history of the Revolution. In it, she argued that "no taxation without representation" applied to any central government, not simply to the government of King George III. Adams never changed his mind either. He believed the Constitution saved the American experiment in representative government. Their disagreement would live on long after these two were gone.

On other issues, however, Warren found an ally in John's wife, Abigail Adams. Both women urged the nation's leaders to "remember the ladies" when they spoke of equality and liberty. Warren stressed the need for formal educational opportunities for women. She lived to see young ladies' academies established in many states, but the first women's college, Mt. Holyoke, was not founded until 1837, 23 years after her death.

#### MERCY OTIS WARREN

Massachusetts playwright, poet, and historian Mercy Otis Warren penned some of the most popular and effective propaganda for the American cause. In her plays, she portrayed pro-British officeholders as greedy, power-hungry traitors, while she praised Boston radicals as noble heroes.

Mrs. James Warren (Mercy Otis) about 1763 John Singleton Copley, American, 1738 -1815 126.05 x 100.33 cm (49 5/8 x 39 1/2 in.) Oil on canvas. Bequest of Winslow Warren. © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### *America's First Constitutions*

**IT MATTERS TODAY:** Having a Vision for the Future  
The Articles of Confederation

#### *Challenges to the Confederation*

Depression and Financial Crisis  
The Northwest Ordinance  
Diplomatic Problems  
A Farmer's Revolt

**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Mercy Otis Warren Criticizes Boston Citizens, 1780s  
The Revolt of the "Better Sort"

#### *Creating a New Constitution*

Revise or Replace?  
Drafting an Acceptable Document

#### *Resolving the Conflict of Vision*

The Ratification Controversy  
The Federalist Victory  
President George Washington

#### *Competing Visions Re-emerge*

Unity's Achievements  
Hamilton and Jefferson's Differences  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Hamilton and Madison Debate Funding and Assumption, 1790

Foreign Affairs and Deepening Divisions  
More Domestic Disturbances  
Jay's Treaty  
Washington's Farewell

#### *Summary*

# Chronology

<b>1770</b>	State constitutions developed		George Washington inaugurated as first president
<b>1776</b>	Oversight in New Jersey constitution gives property-holding women right to vote	<b>1791</b>	Judiciary Act of 1789
<b>1777</b>	Congress adopts Articles of Confederation		First Bank of the United States chartered
<b>1781</b>	States ratify Articles of Confederation		Bill of Rights added to Constitution
	Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown		Alexander Hamilton's <i>Report on Manufactures</i>
<b>1783</b>	Treaty of Paris	<b>1792</b>	Washington reelected
<b>1785</b>	Land Act	<b>1793</b>	Genet affair
<b>1786</b>	Annapolis Convention	<b>1794</b>	Jefferson resigns as secretary of state
	Shays's Rebellion		Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania
<b>1787</b>	Constitutional Convention	<b>1795</b>	Battle of Fallen Timbers
	Northwest Ordinance		Congress approves Jay's Treaty
<b>1787–1788</b>	States ratify U.S. Constitution		Treaty of San Lorenzo
<b>1789</b>	First congressional elections	<b>1796</b>	Washington's Farewell Address
	French Revolution begins		

**B**etween 1776 and 1783, Americans fought to create an independent nation. But what kind of nation would that be? Most free white Americans rejected the notion of an American monarchy and embraced the idea of a republic. Yet, a republic could take many forms, and Americans who enjoyed a political voice disagreed on what form was best for the new nation. As a consequence, the transition from independence to nationhood generated heated debate.

The Articles of Confederation, which joined the states in a “league of friendship,” was the nation’s first effort at republican government. It guided Americans through the last years of the war and the peace negotiations. It also organized the northwest territories and established the steps toward statehood for a territory. But many political leaders believed this government was too weak to solve America’s economic and social problems or set its course for the future.

In 1787 delegates to a Constitutional Convention produced a new plan of government: the Constitution. It was the result of compromises between the interests of small states and large ones, between southern and northern regional interests, and between those who sought to preserve the sovereignty of the states and those who wished to increase the power of the national government. The Constitution created a stronger national government with the right to regulate interstate and foreign trade, and the power to tax.

Antifederalists, who opposed the new government, argued that it threatened the basic ideals of the Revolution, especially the commitment to local representative government. Mercy Otis Warren and Patrick Henry insisted that state governments were the

best guarantee that republican values would survive. Others feared the new government would be dominated by the wealthiest citizens. Federalists, who supported the constitution, argued that the new government would save America from economic disaster and domestic unrest. The Federalists carried the day.

## America's First Constitutions

- ★ **What were the major elements of the Articles of Confederation?**
- ★ **What problems arose in ratifying the Articles?**

The writers of state constitutions were the first to grapple with troubling but fundamental issues—in particular, the definition of citizenship and the extent of political participation. Should women be allowed to vote? Could landless men, servants, free blacks, and apprentices enjoy a political voice? These were exactly the kinds of questions John Adams feared might arise in any discussion of voting rights, or suffrage. They raised the specter of democracy, which he considered a dangerous system.

The state constitutions reflected the variety of opinion on this matter of democracy within a republic. At one end of the spectrum was Pennsylvania, whose constitution abolished all property qualifications and granted the vote to all white males in the state. At the other end were states such as Maryland, whose constitution continued to link the ownership of property to voting. To hold office, a Marylander had to meet even higher standards of wealth than the voters.

Although constitution writers in every state believed that the legislature was the primary branch of government, they were divided over other issues. Should there be a separate executive branch? Should the legislature have one house or two? What qualifications should be set for officeholders? Again, Pennsylvania produced the most democratic answer to these questions. Pennsylvania's constitution concentrated all power to make and to administer law in a one-house, or **unicameral**, elected assembly. The farmers and artisans who helped draft this state constitution eliminated both the executive office and the upper house of the legislature, remembering that these had been strongholds for the wealthy in colonial times. Pennsylvania also required annual elections of all legislators to ensure that the assembly remained responsive to the people's will. In contrast, Maryland and the other states divided powers among a governor, or executive branch, and a **bicameral** legislature, although the legislature enjoyed the broader powers. Members of the upper house in Maryland's legislature had to meet higher property qualifications than those in the lower house, or assembly. In this manner, political leaders in this state ensured their elite citizens a secure voice in lawmaking.

A state's particular history often determined the type of constitution it produced. For example, coastal elites and lowland gentry had dominated the colonial governments of New Hampshire, South Carolina, Virginia, and North Carolina. These states sought to correct this injustice by ensuring representation to small farming districts in interior and frontier regions. The memory of high-handed colonial governors and elitist upper houses in the legislature led Massachusetts lawmakers to severely limit the powers of their first state government. The constitutions in all of these states reflected the strong political voice that ordinary citizens had acquired during the Revolution.

Beginning in the 1780s, however, many states revised their constitutions, increasing the power of the government. At the same time, they added safeguards they believed would prevent abuse. The 1780 Massachusetts constitution was the model for many of these revisions. Massachusetts political leaders built in a system of so-called checks and

**unicameral** Having a single legislative house.

**bicameral** Having a legislature with two houses.



# It Matters Today

## HAVING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In 1791, Alexander Hamilton outlined his vision for the economic future of the United States. When Hamilton predicted that manufacturing would, and should, overtake agriculture as the basis for the American economy, he knew he would be setting himself against some of the most important people in the nation. Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* was not adopted by Congress, but Hamilton's belief in a strong central government with broad economic powers would eventually become central to the economy of the United States.

- Presidential candidates often outline their vision for the nation's future in their inaugural addresses. Select one such inaugural address and analyze the vision it offers.
- In the nineteenth century, reformers established utopian communities. In modern times, minorities and women have put forward their plans for a more egalitarian society. Select one example of these social visions and analyze its contents and the historical circumstances in which it developed.

**bill of rights** A formal statement of essential rights and liberties under law.

balances among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches to ensure that no branch of the government could grow too powerful or overstep its assigned duties. Over the opposition of many farmers and townspeople, these newer state constitutions also curbed the democratic extension of voting and officeholding privileges. Thus wealth returned as a qualification to govern, although the revised constitutions did not allow the wealthy to tamper with the basic individual rights of citizens. In seven states, these individual rights were safeguarded by a **bill of rights** guaranteeing freedom of speech, religion, and the press as well as the right to assemble and to petition the government.

### The Articles of Confederation

There was little popular support for a powerful central government in the early years of the Revolution. Instead, as Adams later recalled, Americans wanted "a Confederacy of States, each of which must have a separate government."

When Pennsylvania's **John Dickinson** submitted a blueprint for a strong national government to the Continental Congress in July 1776, he watched in wonder and dismay as his colleagues transformed his plan, called **Articles of Confederation**, into a government that preserved the rights and privileges of the states.

Members of the one-house Continental Congress agreed that the new government should also be a unicameral legislature, without an executive branch or a separate judiciary. Democrats like Tom Paine and Samuel Adams praised the Articles' concentration of lawmaking, administrative, and judicial powers in the hands of an elected assembly, whereas conservatives like John Adams condemned the new government as "too democratical," lacking "any equilibrium" among the social classes.

Dickinson's colleagues agreed that the state legislatures, not the voters themselves, should choose the members of the Confederation Congress. But they did not agree on how many members each state should be allotted. The question boiled down to this: Should the states have equal representation or **proportional representation** based on population? Dickinson argued for a one-state, one-vote rule, but fellow Pennsylvanian Benjamin Franklin insisted that large states such as his own deserved more influence in the new government. This time, Dickinson's argument carried the day, and the Articles established

**John Dickinson** Philadelphia lawyer and revolutionary pamphleteer who drafted the Articles of Confederation.

**Articles of Confederation** The first constitution of the United States; it created a central government with limited powers and was replaced by the Constitution.

**proportional representation** Representation in the legislature based on the population of each state.

that each state, large or small, was entitled to a single vote when the Confederation roll was called. Any amendment required the unanimous consent of the states.

Arguments over financial issues were as fierce as those over representation and sovereignty. How was each state's share of the federal operating budget to be determined? Dickinson reasoned that a state's contribution should be based on its population, including inhabitants of every age, sex, and legal condition (free or unfree). This proposal brought southern political leaders to their feet in protest. Because their states had large slave populations, the burden of tax assessment would fall heavily on masters and other free white men. In the end, state assessments for the support of the new federal government were based on the value of land, buildings, and improvements rather than on population. The Continental Congress thus shrewdly avoided any final decision on the larger question of whether slaves were property or people.

When Congress finally submitted the Articles to the states for their approval in November of 1777, the fate of the western territories proved to be the major stumbling block to **ratification**. In his draft of the Articles, Dickinson had designated the Northwest Territory as a national domain. The states with colonial charters granting them land from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans protested, each claiming the exclusive right to portions of this vast region bounded by the Ohio River, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River (see Map 7.1). New Jersey, Maryland, and other states whose colonial charters gave them

**ratification** The act of approving or confirming a proposal.



**MAP 7.1** Western Land Claims After American Independence

This map indicates the claims made by several of the thirteen original states to land west of the Appalachian Mountains and in the New England region. The states based their claims on the colonial charters that governed them before independence.

no claim to western territory disagreed. Maryland delegates dug in their heels, insisting that citizens of any state ought to have the right to pioneer the northwestern territories. Maryland's ultimatum—no national domain, no ratification—produced a stalemate until Virginia, which claimed the lion's share of the Northwest, agreed to cede all claims to Congress. The other states with claims followed suit, and in 1781 Maryland became the thirteenth and final state to ratify the Confederation government. Establishing this first national government had taken three and a half years. (The text of the Articles of Confederation is reprinted in the Documents appendix at the back of this book.)

## Challenges to the Confederation

- ★ **What problems undermined the Confederation, and what changes did they produce?**
- ★ **What was the impact of Shays's Rebellion on national politics?**
- ★ **How did the Confederation establish relations with other nations of the world?**

The members of the first Confederation Congress had barely taken their seats in 1781 when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown and peace negotiations began in Paris. The fighting ended, but the physical and economic damage caused by the brutal home-front war was extensive. In New Jersey and Pennsylvania, communities bore the scars of rape and looting by the British occupying armies. In the South, where civil war had raged, a steady stream of refugees filled the cities. In many communities, livestock had vanished, and crops had been seized or ruined. In New England, a natural disaster magnified problems created by the war: wheat crops wiped out by insects, worsening food shortages, and local economic depression.

### Depression and Financial Crisis

**speculators** A person who buys and sells land or some other commodity in the hope of making a profit.

**redeem** To pay a specified sum in return for something; in this case, to make good on paper money issued by the government by exchanging it for hard currency.

**Robert Morris** Pennsylvania merchant and financial expert who advised the Continental Congress during the Revolution and served as a fundraiser for the Confederation government.

**tariff** A tax on imported or exported goods.

Financial problems plagued wealthy Americans as well as poor farmers and unpaid Revolutionary War veterans. Many merchants had overextended their credit importing foreign goods after the war. Land **speculators** had also borrowed too heavily in order to grab up confiscated loyalist lands or portions of the Northwest Territory. Merchants whose fortunes depended on English markets paid a high price for an American victory that cut ties with England. Planters were hard hit when the demand for staple crops such as rice dropped dramatically after the war, and by 1786, New England fisheries were operating at only about 80 percent of their prewar level. Britain banned the sale of American farm products in the West Indies and limited the rights of American vessels to carry goods to and from Caribbean ports.

The Confederation government did not create these economic problems, but it had little success in dealing with them. In fact, it was helpless to solve its own most pressing problem—debt. To finance the war, the Continental Congress had printed more than \$240 million in paper money backed by “good faith” rather than by the hard currency of gold and silver. As doubts grew that the government could ever **redeem** these continentals, their value fell rapidly. The phrase “not worth a continental” indicated attitudes about the government as well as its finances. Congress was also embarrassed by the substantial debts to foreign nations it was unable to repay.

In 1781 the government turned to Philadelphia shipper and merchant **Robert Morris** for advice on how to raise funds. Morris, known as a financial wizard, came up with a solution: ask the states to approve federal **tariffs**, or import taxes, on certain foreign goods. A duty of 5 percent on imported goods, payable in hard currency, would provide desperately

needed income for the Confederation and relieve the states from having to contribute funding many could scarcely afford. But the plan failed because both Virginia and Rhode Island said no. The failure of the tariff strategy prompted one critic of the Confederation government to comment: “Thirteen wheels require a steady and powerful regulation to keep them in good order.” Until Congress could act without the unanimous consent of all states, nothing could “prevent the machine from becoming useless.”

### The Northwest Ordinance

Still in financial crisis, the Confederation pinned its hopes for solvency on the sale of western lands in the Northwest Territory. Here, at least Congress had the authority to act, for it could set policy for the settlement and governance of all national territories. A national land policy took shape in two critical laws that raised money for the government and also guaranteed that the men and women who moved west would not be colonial dependents of the original states.

The **Land Act of 1785** spelled out the terms for sale of frontier lands. Mapmakers divided the region into five districts and subdivided each district into townships. Each township, covering 36 square miles, was broken down in a gridlike pattern of thirty-six 640-acre plots. Congress intended to auction these plots off to individual settlers rather than to land speculators, but when the original selling price of \$1 per acre in hard currency proved too high for the average farm family, Congress lowered the price and lifted the ban on sales to speculators.

The **Northwest Ordinance** of 1787 established that sixty thousand white males were needed for a territory to apply for admission as a state. Thomas Jefferson, who drafted part of this ordinance, took care to protect the liberties of the settlers with a bill of rights and to ban slavery north of the Ohio River (which quietly allowed for the spread of slavery into the southern territories). Jefferson’s provisions also trampled on the rights of American Indians, for their claims to the land were ignored in favor of white settlement.

### Diplomatic Problems

The Confederation’s diplomatic record was as discouraging as its financial plight. Problems with the British and the Indians arose in the West as settlers began to pour into the Northwest Territory. Although the British had agreed in the Treaty of Paris (1783) to evacuate their western forts, they refused to take any steps until the Americans honored their treaty obligations to repay their war debts and return loyalists’ confiscated property. From their strongholds in the territories, the British encouraged Indian resistance by selling arms and supplies to the Shawnees, Miamis, and Delawares. These tribes, and others, denied the legitimacy of the two treaties that turned over the northwest territories to the Americans.

American claims to western lands rested on the 1784 **Treaty of Fort Stanwix** and the 1785 **Hopewell Treaties**. The former, negotiated with the remnants of the Iroquois confederacy, opened all Iroquois lands to white settlement; the second, signed by Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Cherokee chiefs, granted Americans settlement rights in what was then the Southwest. The Shawnees and their allies challenged both treaties. By what right, they asked, did those tribes speak for them? Throughout the 1780s, the Confederation and the Indians resorted to warfare rather than negotiation.

The Confederation preferred diplomacy to armed conflict when dealing with European powers. Congress sent John Adams to Great Britain, but not even this persistent and dedicated New Englander could wring any concessions from the British. The Confederation had problems with allies as well as with enemies. Spain, for example, was

**Land Act of 1785** Act that dealt with the public sale of lands in the Northwest Territory.

**Northwest Ordinance** (1787) Law that established a plan for the admission of new states to the Union.

**Treaty of Fort Stanwix** Treaty signed in 1784 that opened all Iroquois lands to white settlement.

**Hopewell Treaties** Treaties signed in 1785 in which the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees granted American settlement rights in the Southwest.

alarmed by American settlers pouring into the land east of the Mississippi. The Spanish responded by banning all American traffic on the Mississippi River. The Confederation appointed John Jay, fresh from his success as a Paris peace commissioner, to negotiate with Spain on this and other issues, but Jay could make no headway.

### A Farmer's Revolt

**squatter** A person who settles on unoccupied land to which he or she has no legal claim.

**stay laws** Laws suspending the right of creditors to foreclose on debtors; they were designed to protect indebted farmers from losing their land.

**Daniel Shays** Revolutionary War veteran considered the leader of the farmers' uprising in western Massachusetts called Shays's Rebellion.

From Pennsylvania to Maine, eighteenth-century backcountry settlers organized to resist speculators' claims on the land and to demand that political power remain with local communities rather than state governments. After the Revolution, these rebels used the language of republicanism to defend their protests and to justify the occasional violence that erupted in their areas. "We fought for land & liberty, & it is hard if we can't enjoy either," wrote one **squatter** in response to a land speculator's claim to his farm. Farmers suffering from the postwar economic depression had a long list of complaints, including high rents and land prices, heavy taxes, debts, burdensome legal fees, and the failure of central governments to provide protection from Indian attacks and frontier bandits. These backcountry settlers often made members of the political and economic elite uneasy just as their colonial counterparts had done. When farmers in western Massachusetts began an organized protest in 1786, this uneasiness reached crisis proportions.

The farmers of western Massachusetts were among the hardest hit by the postwar depression and the rising inflation that accompanied it. Many were deeply in debt to creditors who held mortgages on their farms and lands. In the 1780s, these farmers begged the state government for temporary relief, hoping that it would pass **stay laws** that would temporarily suspend creditors' rights to foreclose on, or seize, lands and farm equipment. The Massachusetts assembly responded sympathetically, but the upper house of the state legislature, with its more elite members, sided with the creditors and blocked the passage of stay laws. The Massachusetts government then shocked the farmers by raising taxes.

In 1786 hundreds of farmers revolted. They believed they were protecting their rights and their communities as true republicans must do, but to their creditors the farmers appeared to be dangerous rebels threatening the state with "anarchy, confusion, and total ruin." They accused **Daniel Shays**, a 39-year-old veteran of Bunker Hill, of leading the revolt.

In 1786, farmers known as "Shays's rebels" closed several courts and freed a number of their fellow farmers from debtors' prison. Their actions struck a chord among desperate farmers in other New England states, and the rebellion began to spread. Fear of a widespread uprising spurred the Massachusetts government to action. It sent a military force of six hundred to Springfield, where more than a thousand farmers, most armed with pitchforks rather than guns, had gathered to close the local courthouse. When the farmers were within range, the troops let loose a cannon barrage that killed four and set the remaining men to flight. Although Daniel Shays managed to escape, by February 4, 1787 the farmers' revolt was over.

The revolt stirred up fears of slave rebellions and pitched battles between debtors and creditors, haves and have-nots. Above all, it raised doubts among influential political figures about the ability of either state governments or the Confederation to preserve the rule of law. To men such as George Washington, now a planter and private citizen, Shays's Rebellion was a national tragedy, not for its participants but for the reputation of the United States. When the farmers' protest began, Washington wrote to authorities in

# Investigating America

## Mercy Otis Warren Criticizes Boston Citizens

For many Americans, the promise of the Revolution appeared to be failing during the troubled 1780s. Mercy Otis Warren was hardly alone in believing that a republic would survive only as long as its citizens remained patriots. For her, a patriot was a citizen who worked hard, lived simply, and was willing to sacrifice life and fortune for the sake of his or her country. She began to worry that such virtuous men and women were no longer in the majority. Her own Massachusetts society, she feared, had turned its back on virtue in the pursuit of luxury and frivolous enjoyments. She satirized these selfish characteristics in her play, *The Motley Assembly, a Farce*, published for the entertainment of the curious. The play ends with this condemnation of her neighbors and former friends:

.....  
**B**lush Boston! Blush! Thy honest sons bewail, That dance and song over patriot zeal prevail, That Whigs and Tories (joined by wayward chance) Should hand in hand lead on the sprightly dance, Or sword to sword as harmlessly oppose As all such heroes would their country's foes, Here lured by fashion, opposite interests join, And lull their cares and

rage, in cards and wine. Here friends to freedom, vile apostate meet, And here unblushing can each other greet. In mixed assembly, see they crowd the place. Stain to their country, to their sires disgrace. Hell in some hearts, but pleasure in each face, All, all are qualified to join this tribe, Who have a hundred dollars to subscribe.

.....

- The terms *whigs and tories* come from seventeenth-century English politics. Whigs opposed the religious policies of, and abuse of power by, King Charles II. Tories supported both the king's power and his church. Why do you think American loyalists would resent being labeled as Tories?
- An apostate is a person who betrays a trust or an allegiance. What events in 1779 might have led the people of Boston to believe that the worst of the war was over and that they did not need to make as many sacrifices to the cause of independence as they had in 1775 or 1776?
- Why did Warren point out the cost of joining this social assembly?

Massachusetts urging them to act fairly but decisively. "If they have real grievances," he said, the government should acknowledge them. But if not, authorities should "employ the force of government against them at once."

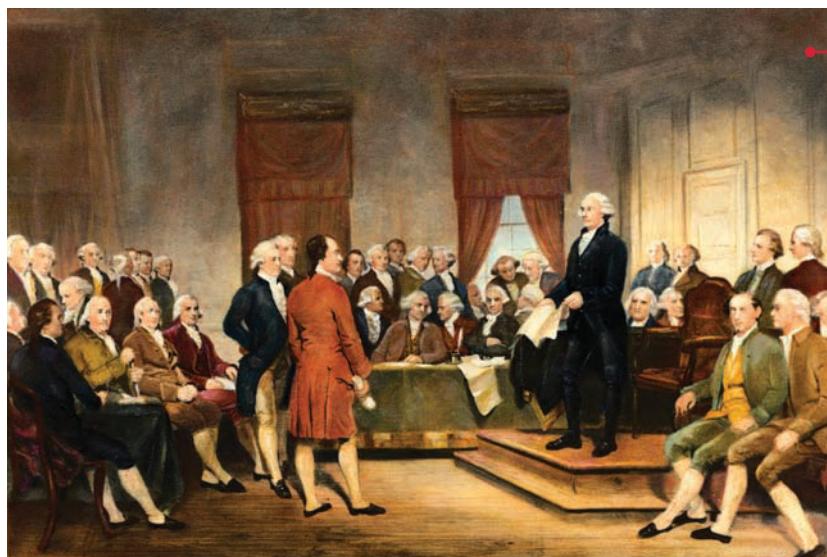
### The Revolt of the "Better Sort"

In important ways, the Articles of Confederation embodied the desires of the revolutionary generation for a limited central government that directed diplomacy and coordinated military defense but left the major tasks of governing to local representative governments. Yet, such a government was proving to have troubling costs and trying consequences. By 1786, members of the nation's elite, or the "better sort," believed the survival of the nation was in question. Washington predicted "the worst consequences from a half-starved, limping government, always moving upon crutches and tottering at every step." For him, for Hamilton, and for others like them who thought of themselves as **nationalists**, the solution was clear. "I do not conceive we can long exist as a nation," Washington remarked, "without having lodged somewhere a power which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State government extends over the several states." Here was a different form of republican government to consider.



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**nationalists** Americans who preferred a strong central government rather than the limited government prescribed in the Articles of Confederation.



In 1876, Thomas Pritchard Rossiter painted his *Signing of the Constitution of the United States* honoring a group of statesmen that included Madison, Hamilton, and Washington, who presided over the Constitutional Convention. Jefferson, absent because of his duties as minister to France, referred to the fifty-five delegates who crafted the Constitution as a gathering of "demigods." Bettmann/Corbis.

Support for a stronger national government grew in the key states of Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York. Men of wealth and political experience urged a reform agenda that included giving the central government taxing powers, as well as the strength to establish stable diplomatic and trade relations with foreign countries. To that end, in 1786 a group of influential Virginians called for a meeting on interstate trade restrictions that placed import taxes on goods carried from state to state. But the meeting organizers had a second agenda: to test the waters on revising the nation's constitution. Convinced that their position had substantial support, these nationalists asked Congress to call a convention in Philadelphia so that political leaders could continue to discuss interstate commerce problems—and other aspects of government reform. Some members of Congress were reluctant, but news of Shays's Rebellion tipped the balance in favor of the convention.

## Creating a New Constitution

- ★ **What major compromises did the framers make in writing the new constitution?**
- ★ **What safeguards did James Madison see in his "checks and balances" system?**

Late in May 1787, George Washington called the convention to order in Philadelphia. Before him sat delegates from eleven of the thirteen states (New Hampshire's delegates did not arrive until late July), closeted behind curtained windows and locked doors in the heat and humidity of a Philadelphia summer. These secrecy precautions stemmed, they said, from their wish to speak frankly about the nation's political and economic problems. They were also looking out for their own reputations in their home states for they quickly realized they might have to make compromises that would be unpopular with their state governments. Only Rhode Island refused to participate, accusing the convention of masquerading as a discussion of interstate trade in order to drastically

revise the national government. The accusation by “Rogue’s Island,” as critics called the smallest state, was correct. The fifty-five prominent and prosperous men did expect to make significant changes in the structure of the government.

Most of the men gathered in that room were lawyers, merchants, or planters—Americans of social standing though not necessarily intellectual achievement. When the absent Jefferson later referred to the convention members as “demigods,” he was probably thinking of the likes of 81-year-old Benjamin Franklin, whose crafty political style set him apart from his colleagues despite his advanced age; or of the brilliant Hamilton of New York, whose reputation as a financial mastermind equal to the Confederation’s adviser Robert Morris was well established; or of Pennsylvania’s Gouverneur Morris, who was widely admired for his intelligence as well as for his literary skills; and finally of **James Madison**, the prim Virginia planter who turned out to be the chief architect of a new constitution.

### Revise or Replace?

Most of the delegates were nationalists, but they did not necessarily agree on how best to proceed. Should they revise the Articles or abandon them? Eventually, several delegates, including Hamilton himself, would present blueprints for the new government. But it was the Virginia planter and lawyer Edmund Randolph who first captured the convention’s attention with his delegation’s proposal, which effectively amended the Articles of Confederation out of existence.

Although Randolph introduced the **Virginia Plan** on the convention floor, James Madison was its guiding spirit. The 36-year-old Madison was no dashing figure. He was a small, frail, charmless hypochondriac. But he was highly respected as a scholar of philosophy and history and as an astute political theorist whose long service in the Virginia legislature and in the Confederation Congress gave him a practical understanding of politics and government. At the convention, Madison brought all his knowledge to bear on this question: What was the best form of government for a strong republic? He concluded, as John Adams had done early in the 1780s, that the fear of tyranny should not rule out a powerful national government. Any dangerous abuse of power could be avoided if internal checks and balances were built into the republican structure.

Madison’s Virginia Plan embodied this conviction. It called for a government with three distinct branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—to replace the Confederation’s Congress, which was performing all three functions. By dividing power in this way, Madison intended to ensure that no individual or group of men could wield too much authority, especially for self-interested reasons. Madison’s plan also gave Congress the power to **veto** laws passed by the state legislatures and the right to intervene directly if a state acted to interrupt “the harmony of the United States.”

The notion of a strong government able, as Madison put it, “to control the governed” but also “obliged to control itself” was endorsed by the delegates. But they were in sharp disagreement over many specific issues in the Virginia Plan. The greatest controversy again swirled around representation in the legislative branch—Congress. Madison proposed a bicameral legislature with membership in both houses based on proportional representation. Large states supported the plan, for representation based on population worked to their advantage. Small states objected heatedly, calling for equal representation for each state. Small-state delegates threw their support behind a second proposal, the **New Jersey Plan**, which also called for three branches of government and gave Congress the power to tax and to control national commerce. This plan, however, preserved an equal voice and vote for every state within a unicameral legislature.

**James Madison** Virginia planter and political theorist known as the “father of the Constitution”; he became the fourth president of the United States.

**Virginia Plan** Fourteen proposals by the Virginia delegation to the Constitutional Convention for creating a more powerful central government and giving states proportional representation in a bicameral legislature.

**veto** The power or right of one branch of government to reject the decisions of another branch.

**New Jersey Plan** A proposal submitted by the New Jersey delegation at the Constitutional Convention for creating a government in which the states would have equal representation in a unicameral legislature.

**Great Compromise** A proposal calling for a bicameral legislature with equal representation for the states in the Senate and proportional representation in the House.

**Three-Fifths Compromise** An agreement to count three-fifths of a state's slave population for purposes of determining a state's representation in the House of Representatives.

**executive powers** Powers given to the president by the Constitution.

**Electoral College** A body of electors chosen by the states to elect the president and vice president; each state may select a number of electors equal to the number of its senators and representatives in Congress.

Debate over the two plans dragged on through the steamy days of a June heat wave. Tempers flared, and threats to walk out of the convention came from both sides. Then a compromise, hammered out by a special committee, was presented by Roger Sherman of Connecticut. The **Great Compromise** used the idea of a two-house legislature to satisfy both sides. It proposed proportional representation in the lower house (the House of Representatives) and equal representation in the upper chamber (the Senate).

The delegates faced one last stumbling block over representation: Which Americans were to be counted to determine a state's population? This issue remained as divisive as when the Articles were drafted. Southern delegates argued that slaves, who composed as much as one-third and sometimes more of each plantation state's residents, should not be included in the population count on which a state's tax assessments were based. On the other hand, they insisted that these slaves should be included in the population count that determined a state's seats in the House of Representatives. Northern delegates protested, declaring that slaves should be considered property in both instances. These delegates were motivated by self-interest rather than a desire for consistency, for if slaves were considered property, not people, the North would dominate the lower house.

A compromise that defied reason but made brilliant political sense settled this question. The **Three-Fifths Compromise** established that three out of five slaves would be included in any state's critical headcount. A clause was then added guaranteeing that the Atlantic slave trade would continue for a twenty-year period.

### Drafting an Acceptable Document

The Three-Fifths Compromise ended weeks of debate over representation. No other issue arose to provoke such controversy, and the delegates proceeded calmly to implement the principle of checks and balances. For example, the president, or executive, was named commander in chief of the armed forces and given primary responsibility for foreign affairs. To balance these **executive powers**, Congress was given the right to declare war and to raise an army. Congress received the critical "power of the purse," but this power to tax and to spend the revenues raised by taxation was checked in part by the president's power to veto congressional legislation. As yet another balance, Congress could override a presidential veto by the vote of a two-thirds majority. Following the same logic of distributing power, the delegates gave authority to the president to name federal court judges, but the Senate had to approve all such appointments.

Occasionally, as in the system for electing the president, the convention chose awkward or cumbersome procedures. Many delegates doubted that the citizens of one state would be familiar enough with a candidate from a distant state to make a valid judgment. In an age of slow communication, few men besides George Washington had a truly national reputation. Should the president be chosen by state legislators who had perhaps worked in government with political leaders from outside their states? Delegates rose to object that this solution threatened too great a concentration of power in the legislators' hands. As a somewhat clumsy compromise, the delegates created the **Electoral College**, a group of special electors to be chosen by the states to vote for presidential candidates. Each state would be entitled to a number of electors equal to the number of its senators and representatives sitting in Congress. If two presidential candidates received the same number of Electoral College votes, or if no candidate received a majority of the Electoral College votes, then the House of Representatives would choose the new president.

The long summer of conflict and compromise ended with a new plan for a national government. Would the delegates be willing to put their names to the document they had created in secrecy and by overreaching their authority? Franklin fervently hoped

so. Though sick and bedridden, Franklin was carried by friends to the convention floor, where he pleaded for unanimous support for the new government. When a weary Washington at last declared the meetings adjourned on September 17, 1787, only a handful of delegates left without signing what the convention hoped would be the new American constitution.

## Resolving the Conflict of Vision

- ★ **What were the Antifederalists' arguments against the Constitution?**
- ★ **What were the Federalists' arguments in its favor?**

The framers of the Constitution called for special state **ratifying conventions** to discuss and then vote on the proposed change of government. They believed that these conventions would give citizens a more direct role in this important political decision. But the ratifying procedure also gave the framers two advantages. First, it allowed them to bypass the state legislatures, which stood to lose power under the new government. Second, it allowed them to nominate their supporters and campaign for their election to the ratifying conventions. The framers added to their advantage by declaring that the approval of only nine states was necessary to establish the Constitution.

### The Ratification Controversy

As Hamilton boasted, “The new Constitution has in favor of its success . . . [the] very great weight of influence of the persons who framed it.” Hamilton was correct. Men of wealth, political experience, and frequently great persuasive powers

put their skills to the task of achieving ratification. But what Hamilton did not mention was that many revolutionary heroes and political leaders opposed the Constitution with equal intensity—most notably Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, and George Clinton, the popular governor of New York. Boston’s most effective revolutionary propagandist, Mercy Otis Warren, immediately took up her pen to attack the Constitution and even encouraged her neighbors to stand firm against what she called an assault on republican values. Thus the leadership on both sides of the issue was drawn from the political elite of the revolutionary generation.

The pro-Constitution forces won an early and important victory by clouding the language of the debate. They abandoned the label “nationalists,” which drew attention to their belief in a strong central government, and chose to call themselves **Federalists**, a name originally associated with a system of strong state governments and limited national government. This shrewd tactic cheated opponents of the Constitution out of their rightful name. The pro-Constitution forces then dubbed their opponents **Antifederalists**. This label implied that their adversaries were negative thinkers, pessimists, and a group lacking a program of its own.

Although the philosophical debate over the best form of government for a republic was an important one, voters considered other, practical factors in choosing a Federalist or Antifederalist position. Voters in states with a stable or recovering economy were likely to oppose the Constitution because the Confederation system gave their states greater independent powers. Those in small, geographically or economically disadvantaged states were likely to favor a strong central government that could protect them from their competitive neighbors. The small states of Delaware and Connecticut ratified the Constitution quickly, but ratification was hotly contested in New York and Virginia.

**ratifying convention** A meeting of delegates in each state to determine whether that state would ratify the Constitution.

**Federalists** Supporters of the Constitution; they desired a strong central government.

**Antifederalists** Opponents of the Constitution; they believed a strong central government was a threat to American liberties and rights.

To some degree, Federalist and Antifederalist camps matched the divisions between the relatively urban, market-oriented communities of the Atlantic coast and the frontier or rural communities of the inland areas (see Map 7.2). The backcountry areas of North and South Carolina and the less economically developed areas of Virginia saw little benefit in a stronger central government, especially one that might tax them. But coastal centers of trade and overseas commerce such as Boston, New York City, and Charleston were eager to see an aggressive and effective national policy regarding foreign



**MAP 7.2** The Federalist and Antifederalist Struggle over the Constitution

The battle over ratification of the Constitution was fiercely fought throughout 1787 and 1788. This map shows the areas of strong antifederalism, the areas of Federalist strength, and the scattered pockets where opinion was evenly divided.

and interstate trade. In these urban centers, artisans and shopkeepers joined forces with wealthy merchants to support the Constitution as they had once joined them to make the Revolution. As a result, the Federalists were better organized, had more resources at their disposal, and campaigned more effectively than the Antifederalists.

The Antifederalists struck hard against the dangerous elitism they believed they saw in the Constitution. They portrayed the Federalists as a privileged, sophisticated minority, ready and able to tyrannize the people if their powerful national government was ratified. Be careful, one Massachusetts man warned, because “these lawyers, and men of learning, and moneyed men, that talk so finely and gloss over matters so smoothly, to make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pill, expect to get into Congress themselves.” And New York Antifederalist Melancthon Smith predicted that the proposed new government would lead inevitably to rule by a wealthy, unrepresentative minority. The Virginia revolutionary leader Richard Henry Lee was flabbergasted that his generation would even consider ratifying the Constitution. “Tis really astonishing,” he wrote to a New York opponent, “that the same people, who have just emerged from a long and cruel war in defense of liberty, should agree to fix an elective **despotism** upon themselves and posterity.”

The Federalist strategy was to portray America in crisis. They pointed to the stagnation of the American economy, to the potential for revolt and social anarchy, and to the contempt that other nations showed toward the young republic. They insisted that the Constitution could preserve the republican ideals of the Revolution far better than would the Articles of Confederation. Their cause was put forward most convincingly by Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay, who entered the newspaper wars over ratification in the key state of New York. Together, they produced a series of eighty five essays known today as the *Federalist Papers*. Their common theme was the link between American prosperity and a strong central government.

**despotism** Rule by a tyrant.

**Federalist Papers** Essays written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison in support of the Constitution.

### The Federalist Victory

Practical politics rather than political theory seemed to influence the outcome of many of the ratifying conventions. Delaware, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut—all small states—quickly approved the Constitution. Antifederalists in Pennsylvania’s rural western regions lost control of the convention to the Federalists and thus that state also endorsed the Constitution. In the remaining states, including Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York, the two sides were more evenly matched.

With Antifederalists in the majority in the Massachusetts convention, the Federalists’ strategy was to make political deals with key delegates, winning over Antifederalists such as Samuel Adams and John Hancock, for example, with promises to demand the addition of a bill of rights to the Constitution. Similar guarantees in Virginia, together with the understanding that Washington was certain to be the first president of the United States if the Constitution went into effect, carried the day in the crucial southern state. Massachusetts ratified by a narrow, nineteen-vote margin, and Virginia became the tenth state to ratify the new government on June 25, 1788.

New York’s battle was equally intense, but once ten states had ratified the Constitution, the new government was a **fait accompli**. Realizing this, on July 26, 1788, a majority of New York delegates voted yes on ratification.

**fait accompli** An accomplished deed or fact that cannot be reversed or undone.

### President George Washington

The election of senators and Congress members was almost complete by February 4, 1789, when presidential electors met in each state to choose the nation’s first president. Although Washington did not seek the position, he knew the nation

expected him to serve. The general was among the very few in the revolutionary generation to have a national reputation. And the hero of the Revolution looked and acted the part of the dignified, virtuous patriot. Washington became president by a unanimous vote of the Electoral College. For regional balance, New Englander John Adams was chosen vice president.

In April 1789, as Washington made his way from Virginia to his inauguration in New York City, the temporary national capital, Americans thronged to greet him with parades, sharply dressed military escorts, and choruses of church bells and cannon fire. Thousands of supporters gathered to see him take the oath of office. Yet amid the celebration, Washington and his closest advisers knew the future was uncharted and uncertain. “We are in a wilderness,” Madison observed, “without a single footstep to guide us.”

Washington agreed, and he proceeded with caution and deliberation. He labored carefully over each of his selections to the almost one thousand federal offices waiting to be filled. He took particular care in choosing the men to head four executive departments created with approval from Congress. Naming his **protégé** Alexander Hamilton to the Treasury Department was probably Washington’s easiest decision. He asked the Massachusetts military strategist Henry Knox to head the War Department and fellow Virginian Edmund Randolph to serve as attorney general. Washington chose another Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, to be secretary of state. Over time, the president established a pattern of meeting with this **cabinet** of advisers on a regular basis to discuss policy matters. Together, they made major decisions and, as Washington expected, expressed serious disagreements that exposed him to differing viewpoints on policy.

**protégé** An individual whose welfare or career is promoted by an influential person.

**cabinet** A body of officials appointed by the president to run the executive departments of the government and to act as the president’s advisers.

## Competing Visions Re-emerge

- ★ **How did Hamilton’s expectations for the new nation differ from those of Jefferson?**
- ★ **How did the French Revolution affect Washington’s diplomatic policy?**

A remarkable—but, as it turned out, short-lived—spirit of unity marked the early days of Washington’s administration. Federalists had won the overwhelming majority of seats in the new Congress, and this success enabled them to work quickly and efficiently on matters they believed had priority. But the unity was fragile. By 1792, sectional divisions were deepening, and as the government debated foreign policy and domestic affairs, two distinct groups, voicing serious differences of opinion, began to form. Alexander Hamilton’s vision for America guided one group. At the heart of the other was the vision of Thomas Jefferson.

**Judiciary Act of 1789** Law establishing the Supreme Court and the lower federal courts; it gave the Supreme Court the right to review state laws and state court decisions to determine their constitutionality.

**Bill of Rights** The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, added in 1791 to protect certain basic rights of American citizens.

### Unity’s Achievements

In addition to creating the four executive departments that became the cabinet, the First Congress passed the **Judiciary Act of 1789**. This act established a Supreme Court, thirteen district courts, and three circuit courts. It also empowered the Supreme Court to review the decisions of state courts and to nullify any state laws that violated either the Constitution or any treaty made by the federal government. President Washington chose John Jay to serve as first chief justice of the Supreme Court.

At the same time, Madison prodded Congress to draft the promised **Bill of Rights**. On December 15, 1791, ten amendments were added to the Constitution as the Bill of Rights, and soon after, both Rhode Island and North Carolina ratified the Constitution and joined the union. Eight of these original constitutional amendments spelled out the

government's commitment to protect individual **civil liberties**. They guaranteed that the new national government could not limit free speech, interfere with religious worship, deny citizens the right to keep or bear arms, force the quartering of troops in private homes, or allow homes to be searched without proper search warrants. The amendments prohibited the government from requiring persons accused of crimes to testify against themselves, nor could it deny citizens the right to a trial by jury. The government also could not deprive a citizen of life, liberty, or property without "due process of law," or impose excessive bail, or administer "cruel and unusual punishments." The Ninth Amendment made clear that the inclusion of these protections and rights did not mean that others were excluded. The Tenth Amendment stated that any powers not given to the federal government or denied to the states belonged solely to the states or the people.

### Hamilton and Jefferson's Differences

Hamilton was consumed by a bold dream: to transform agricultural America into a manufacturing society that rivaled Great Britain. His blueprint for achieving this goal called for tariffs designed to protect developing American industry

rather than to simply raise revenue. It also called for **subsidies**, or government financial support, for new enterprises and incentives to support new industries. And it relied on strong economic and diplomatic ties with the mercantile interests of England. Hamilton's vision had great appeal in the Northeast but few advocates in the southern states. Indeed, his ambitious development program seemed to confirm Patrick Henry's worst fears: that the new government would produce "a system which I have ever dreaded—subserviency of Southern to Northern Interests."

Virginia planters Thomas Jefferson and James Madison offered a different vision of the new nation: a prosperous, agrarian society. Instead of government tariffs designed to encourage American manufacturing, they advocated a national policy of **free trade** to keep consumer prices low. The agrarian view did not entirely rule out commerce and industry in the United States. As long as commercial society remained "a handmaiden to agriculture," Jefferson saw no danger that citizens would be exploited or lured into the love of luxury that destroyed republics. In the same fashion, Hamilton was content to see agriculture thrive as long as it did not drain away the scarce resources of the national government or stand in the way of commercial and industrial growth. Hamilton and men of similar vision around him spoke of themselves as true **Federalists**. Those who agreed with Jefferson and Madison identified themselves as **Republicans**.

As secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton was expected to seek solutions to the nation's **fiscal** problems, particularly the foreign and domestic debts hanging over America's head. In January 1790, Hamilton submitted a *Report on Public Credit* to the Congress. In it, he argued that the public debt fell into three categories, each requiring attention: (1) foreign debt, owed primarily to France; (2) state debts, incurred by the individual states to finance their war efforts; and (3) a national debt in the form of government securities (the notorious paper continentals) that had been issued to help finance the war. To establish credit, and thus to be able to borrow money and attract investors in American enterprises, Hamilton declared that the nation had to make good on all it owed.

Hamilton proposed that the federal government assume responsibility for the repayment of all three categories of debt. He insisted the continentals be redeemed for the amount shown on the certificate, regardless of what their current value might be. And he proposed that *current* holders of continentals should receive that payment regardless of how or when they had acquired them. These recommendations, and the political agenda for economic growth they revealed, raised furious debate within Congress.

**civil liberties** Fundamental individual rights such as freedom of speech and religion, protected by law against interference from the government.

**subsidies** Financial assistance that a government grants to an enterprise considered to be in the public interest.

**free trade** Trade between nations without any protective tariffs.

**Federalists** Political group formed during Washington's first administration; led by Alexander Hamilton, they favored an active role for government in encouraging commercial and manufacturing growth.

**Republicans** Political group formed during Washington's first administration; led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, they favored limited government involvement in encouraging manufacturing and the continued dominance of agriculture in the national economy.

**fiscal** Relating to finances.

James Madison, until now the voice of unity in Congress, leapt to his feet to protest the treasury secretary's plan. The government's debt, both financial and moral, Madison argued, was not to the current creditors holding the continentals but to the *original* holders. Many of the original holders were ordinary citizens and Continental soldiers who had sold these certificates to speculators at a tremendous loss during the postwar depression. The state treasuries of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were three of the largest speculators, buying up great quantities of these bonds when they were disgracefully cheap. If Hamilton's plan were adopted, Madison protested, these speculators, rather than the nation's true patriots, would reap enormous unfair profits.

Madison next led the opposition to Hamilton's proposal that the federal government assume, or take over, the states' debts. Here, Hamilton's motives were quite transparent: as a fierce nationalist, he wished to concentrate both political and economic power in the federal government at the expense of the states. He knew that creditors, who included America's wealthiest citizens, would take a particular interest in the welfare and success of any government that owed them money. By concentrating the debt in the federal government, Hamilton intended to give America's elite a clear stake in America's success. Hamilton also knew that a sizable debt provided a compelling reason for raising revenue. By assuming the state debts, the federal government could undercut state governments' need for new taxes—and justify its own.

**inequities** Unfair circumstances or proceedings.

Congress saw the obvious **inequities** of the plan. Politicians from the Chesapeake quickly reminded Congress that their governments had paid all their war debts during the 1780s. If the national government assumed state debts and raised taxes to repay them, responsible citizens of Maryland and Virginia would be taxed for the failure of Massachusetts or New York to honor their obligations. Although the Senate approved the assumption of state debts, members of the House strongly objected. Hamilton, realizing he faced defeat, maneuvered a behind-the-scenes compromise with Madison and his ally Jefferson, using the location of the national capital as a bargaining chip.

In 1789 the new government had made New York its temporary home until Congress could settle on a permanent site. The choice turned out to be politically delicate because of regional jealousy and competition, and also because in an age of slow travel and communication, it was difficult to keep watch over, and influence, government activities from a distance. Hamilton's proposal to locate the capital southward in exchange for the Virginians' support on assumption of state debts appealed to southern regional pride and to Madison and Jefferson's desire to monitor the deliberations of a powerful government. Northerners also knew the value of proximity, but by trading away the capital location, Hamilton ensured the success of his assumption plan.

Early 1791 brought another controversial proposal from the treasury secretary: a plan to charter a national bank that would serve as fiscal agent for the federal government. Modeled on the Bank of England, the bank would be funded by both the government and private sources in a partnership that fit nicely with Hamilton's plan to tie national prosperity to the interests of private wealth.

Once again, Madison led the opposition. He argued that the Constitution gave the government neither the express right nor the **implied power** to create a national institution such as the bank. The majority of Congress did not agree, but Madison's argument did cause President Washington to hesitate over signing the congressional bill into law. As usual, Washington decided to consult advisers and asked both Secretary of State Jefferson and the treasury head Hamilton to set down their views.

**implied power** Power that is not specifically granted to the government by the Constitution but can be viewed as necessary to carry out the governing duties listed in the Constitution.

**strict constructionist** A person who believes the government has only the powers specifically named in the Constitution.

Like Madison, Jefferson was at that time a **strict constructionist** in his interpretation of the Constitution. On February 15, 1791, he wrote of the dangers of interpreting

# Investigating America

## Hamilton and Madison Debate Funding and Assumption, 1790

The debates over Hamilton's fiscal programs divided old allies and hastened the development of a two-party system. The discussions in Congress also revealed two very different visions of the republic. For Hamilton, the script represented the nation's economic potential, for the securities, when concentrated in the hands of a small number of investors, meant capital. Pay the farmer veterans, he argued, and they would buy a new plow, another cow. Men of means would invest the funds in new businesses that would employ hundreds. The first portion of this document is taken from Hamilton's *Report on Public Credit*. Madison responded in Congress on February 11, 1790.

[H]amilton addressed the question of] whether a discrimination ought not to be made between original holders of the public securities and present possessors by purchase. Those who advocate a discrimination are for making a full provision for the securities of the former, at their nominal value, but contend that the latter ought to receive no more than the cost to them and the interest....

But though many of the original holders sold from necessity, it does not follow that this was the case with all of them. It may well be supposed that some of them did it either through want of confidence in an eventual provision or from the allurements of some profitable speculation. How shall these different classes be discriminated from each other? How shall it be ascertained, in any case, that the money which the original holder obtained for his security was not more beneficial to him than if he had held it to the present time, to avail himself of the provision which shall be made? How shall it be . . . determined whether a discrimination, independent of the breach of contract, would not do a real injury to purchasers; and if it included a compensation to the

primitive proprietors, would not give them an advantage to which they had no equitable pretension.

[Madison replied that many original script holders were forced to sell at low prices during the depression of the 1789s.] A composition, then, is the only expedient that remains. Let it be a liberal one in favor of the present holders; let them have the highest price which has prevailed in the market; and let the residue belong to the original sufferers. This will not do perfect justice; but it will do more real justice and perform more of the public faith than any other expedient proposed. The present holders, where they have purchased at the lowest price of the securities, will have a profit that cannot reasonably be complained of; where they have purchased at a higher price, the profit will be considerable; and even the few who have purchased at the highest price cannot well be losers, with a well funded interest of 6 per cent. The original sufferers will not be fully indemnified; but they will receive from their country a tribute due to their merits, which, if it does not entirely heal their wounds, will assuage the pain of them.

- Madison faced the problem that poor recordkeeping made it difficult to prove who the original holders were, as well as the fact that a majority of those in Congress were script investors. Who do you believe was right in this debate?
- How should a government balance humanitarian concerns with its legal responsibilities? Many investors lived in Europe. What would the defeat of Hamilton's position do to the American image abroad? And did that matter to hard-pressed farmer veterans of the Revolution?

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the government's powers broadly. "To take a single step beyond the boundaries . . . specifically drawn around the powers of Congress," he warned, "is to take possession of a boundless field of power." Hamilton, a **broad constructionist**, saw no such danger in the bank. He based his argument on Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution, which granted Congress the right to "make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper" to exercise its legitimate powers. As he put it on February 23: "The powers contained in a constitution" should be "construed liberally in advancement of the public good." Because it seemed



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**broad constructionist** A person who believes the government can exercise any implied powers that are in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution.

obvious that “a bank has a natural relation to the power of collecting taxes,” Hamilton believed there could be no reasonable constitutional argument against it. Hamilton’s argument persuaded the president. The bank was chartered, and by July 4, 1791, stock in the newly established Bank of the United States was offered for sale.

Hamilton’s assumption strategy and the creation of a bank were just preliminaries to the ambitious economic development program that he put forward in 1792 in his *Report on Manufactures*. But this time his package of policies for aggressively industrializing the nation—including protective tariffs and government incentives and subsidies—was too extreme to win support in Congress. Still, the Bank of the United States, which provided much-needed working **capital** for new commercial and manufacturing enterprises, and the establishment of sound national credit, which attracted foreign capital to the new nation, had gone far toward moving the economy in the direction of Hamilton’s vision.

**capital** Money needed to start or sustain a commercial enterprise.

**French Revolution** Political rebellion against the French monarchy and aristocratic privileges; it began in 1789 and ended in 1799.

**Louis XVI** The king of France (r. 1774–1792) when the French Revolution began; he and his wife, Marie Antoinette, were executed in 1793 by the revolutionary government.

**Reign of Terror** The period from 1793 to 1794 in the French Revolution when thousands of people were executed as enemies of the state.

**Prussia** A northern European state that became the basis for the German Empire in the late nineteenth century.

### Foreign Affairs and Deepening Divisions

within American politics.

In 1789, just as George Washington became the first president of the United States, the **French Revolution** began. And in the years in which Hamilton was advancing his economic programs, that revolution stirred new controversy

The first signs of serious resistance to the French monarchy came when **Louis XVI**, king of France, asked for new taxes. Reformers within the French parliament, or Estates General, refused, choosing instead to reduce the king’s power and create a constitutional monarchy. Outside the halls of government, crowds took to the streets in the name of broad social reform. On July 14, 1789, Parisian radicals stormed the Bastille prison, a symbol of royal oppression, tearing down its walls and liberating its political prisoners. The crowds filling the Paris streets owed some of their political rhetoric and ideals to the American Revolution, a debt the marquis de Lafayette acknowledged by sending his old friend President Washington the key to the Bastille. Like most Americans in these early days of the French Revolution, Washington was pleased to be identified with this new struggle for the “rights of man.” Briefly, enthusiasm for the French Revolution united Hamilton’s Federalists and Jefferson’s Republicans.

By 1793, however, American public opinion began to divide sharply on the French Revolution. Popular support faded when the revolution’s most radical party, the Jacobins, imprisoned and then executed the king and his wife. Many shocked Americans denounced the revolution completely when the Jacobins, in their **Reign of Terror** against any who opposed their policies, began marching moderate French reformers as well as members of the nobility to the guillotine to be beheaded.

Soon after eliminating their revolutionary opponents, the Jacobin government vowed to bring “liberty, equality, and brotherhood” to the peoples of Europe, by force if necessary. This campaign to spread the revolution led France into war with England, Spain, Austria, and **Prussia**. At the very least, France expected the Americans to honor the terms of the treaty of 1778, which bound the United States to protect French possessions in the West Indies from enemy attack. The enemy most likely to strike was Britain, a fact that suddenly made a second war between England and the United States a possibility. American opinion was contradictory and complex. Even those who continued to support the French Revolution, including Jefferson, did not want the United States to become embroiled in a European war. Yet many who condemned the revolution relished any excuse to attack the British, who still occupied forts in the Northwest and restricted American trade in the West Indies. Political leaders such as Hamilton who were working



On July 14, 1789, Parisian citizens stormed the Bastille prison, a symbol of the brutality of France's absolute monarchy. Americans celebrated this event, which marked the beginning of a Revolution that promised to establish "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in France. Yet as the revolution continued, and spread into a war between England and France, Americans would become deeply divided over whom to support. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

toward better relations with England were appalled by the French assault on other nations and by any prospect of American involvement in it. While Americans struggled with these contradictory views, the French plotted to mobilize American support directly.

In 1793 the new French republic sent a diplomatic minister to the United States. When Citizen **Edmond Genet** arrived in Charleston, he immediately launched a campaign to recruit Americans to the war effort. By all accounts, Genet was charming, affable, and in the words of one observer, so humorous that he could "laugh us into the war." President Washington, however, was not amused. Genet's total disregard for diplomatic procedures infuriated Washington. The Frenchman's bold attempts to provoke incidents between the United States and Spain stunned Hamilton. Even Jefferson grew uncomfortable when Genet used the port of Philadelphia to transform a captured British ship into a French privateer!

On April 22, 1793, Washington decided to act. Publicly, the president issued a proclamation that declared American **neutrality** without actually using the term. While allowing Washington to avoid a formal **repudiation** of America's treaty with France, the proclamation made clear that the United States would give no military support to the French. Privately, Washington asked the French government to recall Genet.

The Genet affair had domestic as well as diplomatic repercussions. For the first time, George Washington came under public attack. Republicans questioned his integrity in refusing to honor the Franco-American treaty. Washington was furious with this assault on his character. Federalists struck back, insisting that Jefferson and his followers had actively encouraged Genet's outrageous behavior. By the end of 1793, Jefferson had resigned from Washington's government, more convinced than ever that Hamilton and his supporters posed a serious threat to the survival of the American republic.

**Edmond Genet** Diplomat sent by the French government to bring the United States into France's war with Britain and Spain.

**neutrality** The policy of treating both sides in a conflict the same way and thus favoring neither.

**repudiation** The act of rejecting the validity or the authority of something.

### More Domestic Disturbances

#### Democratic-Republican societies

Political organizations formed in 1793 and 1794 to demand greater responsiveness by the state and federal governments to the needs of the citizens.

**excise** A tax on the production, sale, or consumption of a commodity or on the use of a service within a country.

**Whiskey Rebellion** A protest by grain farmers against the 1794 federal tax on whiskey; militia forces led by President Washington put down this Pennsylvania uprising.

**Treaty of San Lorenzo** Treaty between the United States and Spain, negotiated in 1795 by Thomas Pinckney; Spain granted the United States the right to navigate the Mississippi River and use the port of New Orleans as an outlet to the sea.

Hamilton's Federalists agreed that the republic was in danger—from Jefferson's Republicans. By Washington's second term (he was reelected in 1792), both political groups were trying to rouse popular sentiment for their programs and policies and against those of their opponents. Just as in the prerevolutionary years, these appeals to popular opinion broadened participation in the debate over the nation's future. Ordinary citizens did not always wait until their political leaders solicited their views, however. In the wake of the French Revolution and British interference in the West and on the seas, organizations rose up to make demands on the government. The most troubling of these to President Washington were the **Democratic-Republican societies**. Between 1793 and 1794, thirty-five Democratic-Republican societies were created. These pro-French political groups, were made up primarily of craftsmen and men of the "lower orders," but included some professional men, merchants, and planters. The groups, shared a common agenda: they insisted that political officeholders were "the agents of the people," not their leaders, and thus should act as the people wished.

In 1794 many western farmers were dismayed over what they considered the government's indifference toward the people. Kentucky settlers fretted about the navigation of the Mississippi, while Pennsylvania and Carolina farmers resented a new federal **excise** tax on whiskey. Although the Democratic-Republican societies denied an active role in spurring a new farmers' revolt, a belief that the government ought to respond to its citizens' demands did seem to motivate Pennsylvania, Carolina, and Kentucky farmers to tar and feather excise men, burn the barns of tax supporters, and intimidate county officials. The most determined and organized resistance came from Pennsylvania, where in July 1794, protesters were threatening to march on Pittsburgh if the tax on whiskey was not repealed.

President Washington, haunted by the memory of Shays's Rebellion and worried that the radical spirit of the French Revolution was spreading throughout America, determined to crush this **Whiskey Rebellion** firmly. Calling up thirteen thousand militiamen, the president marched into the countryside to do battle with a few hundred citizens armed with rifles and pitchforks. In the face of such an overwhelming military force, the whiskey rebels abruptly dispersed.

Washington publicly laid the blame for the western insurrection on the Democratic-Republican societies, and Federalists in Congress rushed to propose a resolution condemning those groups. The Jeffersonians, generally believed to be sympathetic to the societies, knew it would be politically damaging to defend them in the aftermath of the Whiskey Rebellion.

By 1796, the Democratic-Republican organizations had vanished from the American political scene. The president's public condemnation and Congress's censure undoubtedly damaged them. But improvements on the western borders also diminished the farmers' interest in protest organizations. In October 1795, Carolina planter Thomas Pinckney won the concession from Spain that Jay had been unable to obtain in earlier negotiations: free navigation of the Mississippi River. Pinckney's **Treaty of San Lorenzo** not only gave western farmers an outlet to ocean trade through the port of New Orleans but also ensured that Indian attacks would not be launched from Spanish-held territories.

### Jay's Treaty

During Washington's second administration, the diplomatic crisis continued to worsen. England resented America's claim to neutrality, believing it helped France. The British, therefore, ignored American claims that "free ships made free

goods” and began to seize American vessels trading with the French Caribbean islands. These seizures prompted new calls for war with Great Britain.

Jefferson’s departure left little anti-British sentiment in the cabinet. But it remained strong in the Congress, where the House of Representatives considered restricting trade with England. Outside the government, war hysteria showed itself as mobs attacked English seamen and tarred and feathered Americans expressing pro-British views.

Early in 1794, the president sent Chief Justice John Jay to England as his special **envoy**. Jay’s mission was to produce a compromise that would prevent war between the two nations. Jay, however, was pessimistic. Britain wanted to avoid war with the United States, but what would British diplomats concede to his weak nation?

Jay’s negotiations did resolve some old nagging issues. In the treaty that emerged, Britain agreed to finally evacuate the western forts it had promised to vacate in 1783. Britain also granted some small trade favors to America in the West Indies. For its part, the United States agreed to see that all prewar debts owed to British merchants were at last paid. In the end, Jay knew he had given up more than he gained: he had abandoned America’s demand for freedom of the seas and acknowledged the British navy’s right to remove French property from any neutral ship.

**Jay’s Treaty** did little to enhance John Jay’s reputation or popularity. After reading it, fellow New Yorker Robert R. Livingston said bluntly: “Mr. Jay has sacrificed the essential interests of this country.” In Congress, judgments on the treaty were openly **partisan**. Federalists credited Jay’s Treaty with preserving the peace, but Republicans condemned it as an embarrassment and a betrayal of France. The treaty finally squeaked through the Senate in the spring of 1795. The House debate on appropriations for the treaty was equally bitter and prolonged. In the end, however, Congress endorsed Jay’s handiwork. Despite the criticism, Jay knew he had accomplished his mission, for American neutrality in the European war continued.

### Washington’s Farewell

The bitter political fight over Jay’s Treaty, combined with the nagging criticism of his policies in the press and the hardening of party lines between Federalists and Republicans, helped George Washington make an important decision: he would not seek a third term as president. Instead, in 1796 he would return to his beloved Virginia home, Mount Vernon, and resume the life of a gentleman planter.

When Washington retired, he left behind a nation very different from the one whose independence he had helped win and whose survival he had helped secure. The postwar economic depression was over, and the war raging in Europe had produced a steadily rising demand for American foodstuffs. More fundamentally, in the fifteen years since the Revolution, the U.S. economy had moved decisively in the direction that Hamilton had envisioned: toward the values and expectations of a **market economy**—with its stress on maximizing profit and the pursuit of individual economic interests. Hamilton’s policies as secretary of the treasury had both reflected and advanced a growing interest in the expansion of trade, the growth of markets, and the development of American manufacturing and industry. In its political life, the republic had been reorganized and the relationships between the states and the central government redefined. The new Constitution granted greater diplomatic and commercial powers to the federal government but protected individual citizens through the Bill of Rights. America’s political leaders, though convinced that **factions** were dangerous to the survival of the republic, had nevertheless created and begun to work within an evolving party system.

**envoy** A government representative charged with a special diplomatic mission.

**Jay’s Treaty** Controversial 1794 treaty negotiated between the United States and Great Britain by John Jay to ensure American neutrality in the French and English war.

**partisan** Taking a strong position on an issue out of loyalty to a political group or leader.

**market economy** An economy in which production of goods is geared to sale or profit.

**faction** A political group with shared opinions or interests.

In his Farewell Address to the public, Washington spoke with feeling against parties in a republic, urging the nation to return to nonpartisan cooperation. Washington also warned America not to “entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition.” Americans must not let any alliance develop that would draw the nation into a foreign war.

## Summary

After independence was declared, Americans met the challenge of creating a new nation out of thirteen distinct states. Faced with enormous debt and still surrounded by real and potential enemies, the new nation’s ability to survive seemed doubtful to many. As colonies became states, they drafted their own constitutions. Some put in place democratic forms of government whereas others built in more restrictive features such as high property qualifications for officeholding. The first national government, created by the Articles of Confederation, reflected the states’ desire to preserve their individual sovereignty. It also embodied the revolutionary generation’s opposition to a strong centralized government. The Confederation government thus lacked basic powers: it could not raise taxes or regulate commerce.

The Confederation could point to several achievements, however; it negotiated the peace treaty of 1783, and it established, through the Northwest Ordinance, the process by which territories became states on an equal footing with the original states. But with limited powers, the Confederation could not resolve the nation’s financial problems, deal effectively with foreign nations, or ensure social order within its borders. Efforts to raise funds through the sale of western land led to new conflict with both the British and the Indians. Settlement on the southern frontier provoked retaliation by the Spanish.

Domestic violence erupted when Massachusetts farmers, hard hit by the postwar depression, rose up in revolt in Shays’s Rebellion in 1786. By that time, many of the nation’s elite political figures were calling for a stronger national government.

These elites achieved that in the summer of 1787, with the creation of a new constitution. But soon after George Washington took office as the first president, serious differences in political opinion again emerged. Hamilton’s vision of a vigorous commercial and industrial nation conflicted with Jefferson’s desire for an agrarian nation. Their two factions disagreed over economic and foreign policy. The French Revolution intensified the divisions: Whereas Hamilton argued against American support for the French in their war with England, Jefferson pressed the administration to support their fellow revolutionaries. Washington managed to steer a neutral course in this European conflict. By the end of Washington’s second term, the United States had expanded its borders; negotiated with Spain for access to the Mississippi River; and under Hamilton’s guidance, it had established a national bank at the center of an economic system that promoted market-oriented growth. The country had survived domestic unrest and the development of political parties. The departing Washington cautioned Americans not to allow competing visions of America’s future to harm the new nation.

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# CHAPTER 8

# The Early Republic 1796–1804

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### **Conflict in the Adams Administration**

- The Split Election of 1796
  - XYZ: The Power of Patriotism
  - The Home Front in the Quasi-War
  - Settlement with France
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Jefferson's Kentucky Resolution, 1798

### **The "Revolution of 1800"**

- The Lesser of Republican Evils
- Federalist Defenses and a Loyal Opposition

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### **Republicanism in Action**

- Assault on Federalist Defenses
- Implementing a New Economy
- Threats to Jefferson's Vision
- Pushing Westward

### **Challenge and Uncertainty in Jefferson's America**

- The Religious Response to Social Change
  - The Problem of Race in Jefferson's Republic
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Jefferson's Notes and Slavery, 1785

### **Summary**

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Jedidiah Peck**

Jedidiah Peck, a veteran of the American Revolution, was a member of the New York Assembly at the time of his arrest in 1799. The United States was caught up in a wave of patriotism after the French had slighted President Adams's ambassadors in the XYZ affair. Federalists, pushing for a war against France, had passed a Sedition Act designed to silence all internal dissent. The act divided the country and enraged the Republicans. Perhaps more than any other warrant issued under the federal Sedition Law of 1798, Peck's time in jail indicated just how determined many members of the Adams administration were to silence opposition voices. His arrest also reveals that no national consensus had yet emerged on what, if any, limits should exist on free speech during wartime—a debate over political dissent that continues to this day.

Following his years in the state militia, Peck settled along the frontier, in Otsego, New York. Like many ambitious young men, Peck pursued a number of occupations, from millwright to surveyor to preacher, and the last two jobs brought him into contact with other new voters. Despite his common background and lack of formal education, Peck identified with the Federalist Party and its centralized approach to economic development. In 1798 he was appointed judge of the County Court of Common Pleas, and the following year saw his election to the state assembly.

### **SEDITION ACT BROADSIDE**

Luther Baldwin was in a Newark, New Jersey tavern, when he drunkenly wished that a celebratory artillery salute hit President Adams in the posterior. Tried for sedition, Baldwin was fined \$150 and briefly jailed.

American Antiquarian Society

NEWARK, November 6.

Sedition law, &c

Mr. Luther Baldwin, of this town, was on Saturday last arrested by the marshal of this state under the late sedition act, for dropping an expression, in a unguarded moment, amounting as it is said, to a wish that the president of the United States was dead. That it is highly improper and unbecoming for any person to wish the death of another all will allow—but that it ought to be made the subject of a prosecution all will disallow; and neither ought it to be made respecting one of the officers of government, for that would be placing them, who are the servants or agents of the people, above the people themselves. Here's liberty for you! But more on this subject hereafter.

Little credit is due to the English ministerial details of the subjugation of Ireland. Americans can judge of ministerial accounts of the suppression of rebellion; how often did the royal

Gazettes announce that the rebellion in America was quelled. How was Burgoyne described as marching with an all conquering army down to New York—and yet we know he went to Boston, under the safe conduct of the brave general Gates—and Cornwallis may yet go to Paris. May Ireland prove a second America, to crown the British Empire?

Once in Albany, however, Peck defied his party. He not only welcomed a discussion over endorsing the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, which asserted that states could reject federal laws, he also favored a resolution declaring the Sedition Act unconstitutional under the First Amendment. Furious with Peck's votes, local Federalists called for his removal from the party. But Peck ran for reelection and won—this time as a Republican. Angry at what he regarded as an assault on his political independence, Peck publicly signed and circulated a petition that called on Congress to repeal the hated Sedition Act.

Now it was the Federalists who would not back down. Judge William Cooper, the Federalist squire who dominated central New York politics (and the father of novelist James Fenimore Cooper), handed down an indictment that accused Peck of circulating a malicious petition in “violation of the Peace and dignity of the United States.” Marshals dragged Peck from his home “at midnight, manacled,” and carried him to New York City for trial. After posting bail, Peck returned to the assembly and even ran for reelection while awaiting his April 1800 trial.

The Federalists had gone too far. The “right to petition the government for a redress of grievances” was clearly protected by the First Amendment, and as gleeful Republicans pointed out, even George III had accepted petitions from his American subjects. Embarrassed, President Adams instructed the district attorney to use his discretion in the case, and at that point the charges against Peck were quietly dropped. For many, Peck became the symbol of peaceful protest within the system. Yet the question of whether citizens can, or should, criticize the government during time of war would continue to haunt the country throughout its history.

When Washington stepped down as president, the stability that his leadership lent to a new and uncertain government retired with him. Washington’s replacement, John Adams, proved incapable of calming national anxieties. Under his watch, America became involved in an undeclared war with France and saw its international reputation consistently decline. Domestic unrest prevailed as well. Led by Alexander Hamilton, hardcore Federalists had tried to undermine the electoral process in 1796 and then used the crisis with France to wage an internal war against their political enemies. Far from succeeding in the destruction of their critics, these Federalist efforts helped crystallize opposition, giving Hamilton’s key rival, Thomas Jefferson, a forum from which to assault the party in power. In 1800, despite trying to rig the national election again, Federalists were soundly defeated and turned out of office.

Assuming the presidency in 1801, Jefferson ushered in a new era in American politics, instituting a series of reforms that launched the country on a course of continental expansion and global trade. His secretary of the treasury, Albert Gallatin, implemented drastic tax cuts and even deeper slashes in government spending. Despite reductions in naval expenditures, Jefferson waged an aggressive foreign policy designed to restore American international trading and win new territory from along the nation’s borders. His successes could be measured by a mounting federal treasury surplus, increased national income, and expanding borders. But for many, the promise of Jefferson’s America remained unfulfilled. For women, Native Americans, and African Americans, life improved little, if at all, and underlying prejudices and rigid codes of public behavior prevented true democratization.

# Chronology

<b>1791</b>	Slave revolt in Saint Domingue		John Marshall becomes chief justice
<b>1796</b>	George Washington's Farewell Address		War begins between American navy ships and Barbary pirates
	First contested presidential election: John Adams elected president, Thomas Jefferson vice president		Outdoor revival meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky
<b>1797</b>	XYZ affair	<b>1802</b>	Congress repeals all internal taxes
<b>1798</b>	Quasi-War with France begins		Congress repeals Judiciary Act of 1801
	Alien and Sedition Acts		French invade Saint Domingue
	Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions	<b>1803</b>	<i>Marbury v. Madison</i>
	George Logan's mission to France		Impeachment of Justices John Pickering and Samuel Chase
<b>1799</b>	Fries's Rebellion		Louisiana Purchase
	Napoleon seizes control in France	<b>1804</b>	Twelfth Amendment ratified
<b>1800</b>	Convention of Mortefontaine ends Quasi-War		Jefferson reelected
	Jefferson and Aaron Burr tie in Electoral College	<b>1804–1806</b>	Lewis and Clark expedition
	Spain gives Louisiana back to France	<b>1806–1807</b>	Zebulon Pike's expedition
<b>1801</b>	Jefferson elected president in House of Representatives; Burr vice president	<b>1816</b>	African Methodist Episcopal Church formed in Philadelphia
	Judiciary Act of 1801		

## Conflict in the Adams Administration

- ★ **How did diplomatic affairs in Europe affect Americans?**
- ★ **How did Federalists manipulate the crisis with France in 1798 for their own political advantage?**
- ★ **What steps did Republicans take to counter Federalist manipulations?**

Retiring President George Washington spoke for many in 1796 when he warned in his Farewell Address of “the baneful effects of the spirit of party.” Both Hamilton and Jefferson, and their followers, were thoroughgoing republicans, but their conceptions of republicanism were essentially different. Hamiltonians tended to be “classical republicans,” and espoused the belief that nations are fragile and must be led by men of substance and property; in short, by an aristocracy that could protect the people from themselves. Jeffersonians, on the other hand, tended to be “liberal republicans,” asserting that the state existed solely to guarantee equal participation for citizens pursuing private interests in the political and economic realm. For Federalists, aristocratic Britain provided the appropriate model; for Republicans, popularly led republicanism in revolutionary France came closer to the ideal. These views were fundamentally incompatible and led each side to conviction that the other sought to destroy “real” republicanism. The outcome was serious political conflict during the years following Washington’s retirement.

### The Split Election of 1796

As the broadly accepted leader of the opposition to Hamilton's policies, Jefferson was the Republicans' logical choice to represent them in the presidential election in 1796. Most people at the time were not surprised that Republicans chose

**Aaron Burr**, a brilliant young New York attorney and member of the Senate, to balance the ticket. Though years apart in age and from vastly different backgrounds, both Jefferson and Burr were veterans of the revolutionary struggles in 1776 and outspoken champions of liberal republicanism.

The dapper New Yorker styled himself a spokesman for the common man, but Burr was no more an artisan than Jefferson was a farmer. Burr's grandfather was the famous evangelical minister Jonathan Edwards, and his family continued to have enormous influence. During the Revolutionary War, Burr accepted a commission in the Continental Army, where he found common cause with the radical democrats who had formed the Sons of Liberty. By 1784, he had used his political connections and backing from the Sons of Liberty to win a place in the New York state assembly. In 1791 the New York Sons of Liberty, now calling themselves the Society of St. Tammany, maneuvered Burr's election to the U.S. Senate.

In 1789, Jefferson had returned from Paris to join Washington's cabinet as secretary of state. He was deeply disturbed to find that the once-unified revolutionary forces he knew from 1776 had divided into what he called a "republican side" and a "kingly one."

The unified Republican ticket contrasted sharply with divisions in the Federalist faction. Most Federalists assumed that Vice President Adams would succeed Washington as president, but Hamilton and some other hardcore party members doubted the New Englander's loyalty to the party. They favored **Thomas Pinckney** of South Carolina. The younger son of a prestigious South Carolina planter, Pinckney emerged as a major political force when he negotiated the treaty of San Lorenzo with Spain, opening the Mississippi River to American commerce and winning Pinckney the unreserved admiration of both southerners and westerners. Hamilton supported Pinckney, both because Pinckney was less associated with radical causes than was Adams and because Hamilton felt he could exercise more influence over the mild-mannered South Carolinian than he could over the stiff-necked Yankee.

Most Federalists, however, aligned behind the old warhorse from Massachusetts. Adams, a descendant of New England Calvinists, was a man of strong principles, fighting for what he believed was right despite anyone's contrary opinion. Although Adams was a thorough Federalist, he remained Jefferson's close friend: both he and his wife, Abigail, maintained a spirited correspondence with the Virginian during his stay in Paris. Like Washington, Adams was seen by many old revolutionaries as being above politics—as a **statesman** whose conscience and integrity would help the new nation avoid the pitfalls of **factionalism**.

Hamilton sought to use a loophole in the Constitution to rig the election against Adams. According to the Constitution, each member of the Electoral College could cast votes for any two candidates; the highest vote getter became president, and the runner-up became vice president. Hamilton urged Pinckney supporters to cast only one vote—for Pinckney—so that Adams could not get enough votes to win the presidency. But Hamilton did not expect Adams supporters to learn of the plot; when they did, they withheld votes from Pinckney to make up for the votes being withheld from Adams. Because of the squabbling within the Federalist faction, Jefferson received the votes of disgruntled Federalist electors as well as electors within Republican ranks. He thus ended up with more

**Aaron Burr** New York lawyer and vice-presidential candidate in 1796; he became Jefferson's vice president in 1801 after the House of Representatives broke a deadlock in the Electoral College.

**Thomas Pinckney** South Carolina politician and diplomat who was an unsuccessful Federalist candidate for president in 1796.

**statesman** A political leader who acts out of concern for the public good and not out of self-interest.

**factionalism** In politics, the emergence of various self-interested parties (factions) that compete to impose their own views onto either a larger political party or the nation.

votes than Pinckney. So the nation emerged from the first truly contested presidential election with a split administration: the president and vice president belonged to different factions and held opposing political philosophies.

Although brilliant, Adams was ill-suited to lead a deeply divided nation. The new president's aloofness did little to put liberal Republicans' fears to rest. In fact, Adams retained Oliver Wolcott, James McHenry, and Timothy Pickering from Washington's cabinet, all of whom were Hamilton loyalists. This move thoroughly angered Republicans, who had hoped Hamilton's influence would wane now that he had retired from government service to practice law. Clearly, the divisions between classical and liberal republicans were still alive and the two views remained locked in conflict. This disunity enticed interested parties both at home and abroad to try to undermine Adams's authority and influence.

**James Monroe** Republican politician from Virginia who served in diplomatic posts under George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson; he later became the fifth president of the United States.

**Charles Cotesworth Pinckney** Federalist politician and brother of Thomas Pinckney; he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Paris in 1796.

### XYZ: The Power of Patriotism

One group seeking to take advantage of the divisions in the United States was the revolutionary government in France. America's minister in Paris, **James Monroe**, sympathized with the French cause, but the pro-British impact of Jay's Treaty and the antirevolutionary rhetoric adopted by Federalists led the French to suspect American sincerity. During the election of 1796, France sought to influence American voting by actively favoring the Republican candidates, threatening to terminate diplomatic relations if the vocally pro-British Federalists won. True to its word, the revolutionary government of France broke off relations with the United States as soon as Adams was elected.

Angry at the French, Adams retaliated in 1796 by calling home the sympathetic Monroe and replacing him with devout Federalist **Charles Cotesworth Pinckney**, the older brother of Thomas. The French refused to acknowledge Pinckney as ambassador and began seizing American ships. Faced with what was fast becoming a diplomatic crisis, and possibly a military one as well, Adams wisely chose to pursue two courses simultaneously. Asserting that the United States would not be "humiliated" by "a sense of inferiority," he pressed Congress in 1797 to build up America's military defenses. At the same

One of the fathers of the American Revolution, Adams seemed the perfect choice to step into the presidency when Washington chose to step down at the end of his second term. Though many were comforted by Adams's conservative statesmanship, the rigid New Englander was poorly qualified to deal with the partisan politics that haunted his administration. Library of Congress.



time, he dispatched John Marshall and Elbridge Gerry to join Pinckney in Paris, where they were to arrange a peaceful settlement of the two nations' differences.

Playing a complicated diplomatic game, French foreign minister **Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord** declined to receive Pinckney and the peace delegation. As weeks passed, three French businessmen residing in Paris, whose international trading profits stood at risk, offered themselves as go-betweens in solving the stalemate. These men suggested that if the Americans were willing to pay a bribe to key French officials and guarantee an American loan of several million dollars to France, the three Frenchmen would be able to get them a hearing. Offended at such treatment, Pinckney broke off diplomatic relations. Reporting the affair to President Adams, Pinckney refused to name the would-be go-betweens, calling them only "X," "Y," and "Z."

Americans' response to the **XYZ affair** was overwhelming. France's diplomatic slight seemed a slap in the face to a new nation seeking international respect. In Philadelphia, people paraded in the streets to protest French arrogance, chanting Pinckney's reported response: "No, no, not a sixpence!" This wave of patriotism overcame the spirit of division that had plagued the Adams administration, giving the president a virtually unified Congress and country. In the heat of the moment, Adams pressed for increased military forces, and in short order Congress created the Department of the Navy and appropriated money to start building a fleet of warships. Then, on July 7, 1798, Congress rescinded all treaties with France and authorized privateering against French ships. Congress also created a standing army of twenty thousand troops and ordered that the militia be expanded to thirty thousand men. Washington added his prestige to the effort by coming out of retirement to lead the new army, with Hamilton as his second-in-command. Although running sea battles between French and American ships resulted in the sinking or capture of many vessels on both sides, Congress shied away from actually declaring war, which led to the conflict being labeled the **Quasi-War**.

### The Home Front in the Quasi-War

Still disappointed over their failure to steal the presidential election, Federalists immediately seized upon the war as a means to crush their political enemies. In Congress, they began referring to Jefferson and his supporters as the "French Party" and accused the vice president and his faction of treason whenever they advised a moderate course. Arguing that the presence of this "French Party" constituted a danger to national security, congressional Federalists proposed a series of new laws to destroy all opposition to their conception of true republicanism.

One source of opposition was **naturalized** American citizens. The revolutionary promises of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" had drawn many immigrants to the United States. Disappointed by Hamilton's approach to government and economics, they were drawn to Jefferson's rhetoric regarding equal opportunity and his attacks on aristocracy. In 1798 Federalists in Congress passed three acts designed to counter political activities by immigrants. The Naturalization Act extended the residency requirement for citizenship from five to fourteen years. The Alien Act authorized the president to deport any foreigner he judged "dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States." The Alien Enemies Act permitted the president to banish any foreigner he considered dangerous during a national emergency. The Naturalization Act was designed to prevent recent immigrants from supporting the Republican cause by barring them from the political process. The other two acts served as a constant reminder that the president or his agents could arbitrarily deport any resident alien who stepped out of line.

**Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord** French foreign minister appointed by the revolutionary government in 1797; he later aided Napoleon Bonaparte's overthrow of that government and served as his foreign minister.

**XYZ affair** A diplomatic incident in which American envoys to France were told that the United States would have to loan France money and bribe government officials as a precondition for negotiation.

**Quasi-War** Diplomatic crisis triggered by the XYZ affair; fighting occurred between the United States and France between the early summer of 1798 and the official end of the conflict in September 1800, but neither side issued a formal declaration of war.

**naturalized** Granted full citizenship (after having been born in a foreign country).

The other source of support for Jefferson was a partisan Republican press, which attempted to balance the biased news and criticism spewing forth from Federalist news sources with biased accounts of its own. To counter this, congressional Federalists passed the Sedition Act. In addition to outlawing conspiracies to block the enforcement of federal laws, the Sedition Act prohibited the publication or utterance of any criticism that would bring the government or its officials “into contempt or disrepute.” In the words of one Federalist newspaper, “It is patriotism to write in favour of our government, it is **sedition** to write against it.” Not surprisingly, all of the defendants in the fifteen cases brought by federal authorities under the Sedition Act were prominent Republican newspaper editors or politicians like Jedidiah Peck.

**sedition** Conduct or language inciting rebellion against the authority of a state.

**Alien and Sedition Acts** Collectively, the four acts—Alien Act, Alien Enemies Act, Naturalization Act, and Sedition Act—passed by Congress in 1798 designed to prevent immigrants from participating in politics and to silence the anti-Federalist press.

**Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions** Statements that the Virginia and Kentucky legislatures issued in 1798 in response to the Alien and Sedition Acts; they asserted the right of states to overrule the federal government.

**interpose** To place a barrier between two objects or forces; to Jefferson, the principle of interposition meant that states had the right to use their sovereign power as a barrier between the federal government and the states’ citizens when the natural rights of those citizens were at risk.

**states' rights** The political position in favor of limiting federal power to allow the greatest possible self-government by the individual states.

**Napoleon Bonaparte** General who took control of the French government in November 1799, at the end of France’s revolutionary period; he eventually proclaimed himself emperor of France and conquered much of the continent of Europe.

Republicans complained that the **Alien and Sedition Acts** violated the Bill of Rights, but Congress and the federal judiciary, controlled as they were by Washington appointees, paid no attention. Dissidents had little choice but to take their political case to the state governments, which they did in the fall of 1798. One statement, drafted by Madison, came before the Virginia legislature, and another, by Jefferson, was considered in Kentucky.

Madison and Jefferson based their **Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions** on the Tenth Amendment, contending that powers not specifically granted to the federal government by the Constitution fell to the states. By passing laws such as the Alien and Sedition Acts that were not explicitly permitted in the Constitution, Congress had violated the “general principles of free government.” The two authors differed, however, in the responses they prescribed for states to take. For his part, Madison asserted that when the majority of states agreed that a federal law had violated their constitutional rights, they could collectively overrule national authority. But Jefferson went further, arguing that each individual state had the “natural right” to **interpose** its own authority to protect its own rights and the rights of its citizens.

The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions passed in their respective state legislatures, but no other states followed suit. Even within Kentucky and Virginia, great disagreement arose over how far state authority should extend. Nevertheless, this response to the Federalists’ use of federal power brought the disputed relationship between federal law and **states' rights** into national prominence.

### Settlement with France

The Federalists’ seeming overreaction to French provocation and domestic protest alienated increasing numbers of Americans. Adams himself was eager to end the conflict, and when news from France hinted that Foreign Minister Talleyrand

was asking for a new American delegation to be sent, Adams seized the opportunity. Telling the Federalist-dominated Congress that he would give them the details later, Adams instructed the American minister to the Netherlands, William Vans Murray, to go immediately to Paris. As rumors of negotiations began to circulate, Hamilton and his supporters became furious, all but accusing Adams of treason. This gave the president the ammunition he needed: he fired Pickering; Wolcott; and McHenry, Hamilton’s primary supporters in his cabinet.

Adams’s diplomatic appeal to France was well timed. When Murray and his delegation arrived in Paris in November 1799, they found that whatever ill feeling might have existed toward the United States had been swept away. On November 9, 1799, **Napoleon Bonaparte** had overthrown the government that was responsible for the XYZ affair. Napoleon was more interested in establishing a transatlantic empire than in continuing an indecisive conflict with the United States. After some negotiation, Murray and Napoleon drew up and signed the Convention of Mortefontaine, ending the Quasi-War on September 30, 1800.

# Investigating America

## Jefferson's Kentucky Resolution, 1798

Jefferson regarded the Alien and Sedition Acts not merely as blatant attempts to outlaw his Republican Party, but as a violation of the "experiment on the American mind"—that is, an attack on the Enlightenment ideal of a free exchange of opinions among rational people. Because Jefferson himself feared prosecution under the Sedition law, this resolution was composed in secret and carried to Kentucky by John Breckinridge, a former Virginian then serving in the Kentucky assembly. While visiting Monticello in October, James Madison readied a similar but more temperate resolution for the Virginia assembly, which was introduced by John Taylor. The Kentucky Resolution consisted of but five paragraphs, and the most critical is reproduced here.

.....

**R**ESOLVED, That this commonwealth considers the federal Union, upon the terms and for the purposes specified in the late compact, as conducive to the liberty and happiness of the several states: That it does now unequivocally declare its attachment to the Union, and to that compact, agreeable to its obvious and real intention, and will be among the last to seek its dissolution: That if those who administer the general government be permitted to transgress the limits fixed by that compact, by a total disregard to the special delegations of power therein contained, annihilation of the state governments, and the erection upon their ruins, of a general consolidated government, will be the inevitable consequence: That the principle and construction contended for by sundry of the state legislatures, that the general government is the exclusive judge of the extent of the powers delegated to it, stop nothing short of despotism; since the discretion of those who

administer the government, and not the constitution, would be the measure of their powers: That the several states who formed that instrument, being sovereign and independent, have the unquestionable right to judge of its infraction; and that a nullification, by those sovereignties, of all unauthorized acts done under colour of that instrument, is the rightful remedy: That this commonwealth does upon the most deliberate reconsideration declare, that the said alien and sedition laws, are in their opinion, palpable violations of the said constitution; and however cheerfully it may be disposed to surrender its opinion to a majority of its sister states in matters of ordinary or doubtful policy; yet, in momentous regulations like the present, which so vitally wound the best rights of the citizen, it would consider a silent acquiescence as highly criminal: That although this commonwealth as a party to the federal compact; will bow to the laws of the Union, yet it does at the same time declare, that it will not now, nor ever hereafter, cease to oppose in a constitutional manner, every attempt from what quarter soever offered, to violate that compact. . .

.....

- To what extent was Jefferson's states' rights manifesto consistent with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? Or did it violate the *spirit* of the Constitution?
- What were the implications for a national union if individual states practiced this idea on a regular basis?
- Is it possible for Jefferson's resolution to be both constitutionally sound and politically dangerous? How might this idea, devised as a protection of free speech, be misused by others in the future?

## The "Revolution of 1800"

- ★ **What did Thomas Jefferson mean by the statement "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principles"?**
- ★ **How did Jefferson's vision for America differ from those of Hamilton, Adams, and other Federalists?**

The partisan press in 1800 portrayed the political situation as a simple contrast between the major presidential candidates. The Republican press characterized Adams as an aristocrat and a **spendthrift** whose efforts to expand the powers of the federal government were attempts to rob citizens of freedom and turn the United States back into a colony



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**spendthrift** A person who spends money recklessly or wastefully.

of England. Jefferson, in contrast, was portrayed as a man of the people, sensitive to the appeals of southern and western agricultural groups who felt perpetually ignored or abused by northeastern Federalists and their constituents. According to Federalist newspapers, however, Vice President Jefferson was a dangerous radical and an atheist; Adams was a man whose policies and steady-handed administration would bring stability and prosperity—qualities that appealed to manufacturers and merchants in New England, as well as to Calvinists and other supporters of classical republicanism. The rhetoric became so hateful that even Adams and Jefferson got caught up in it—the old friends stopped speaking to each other; nearly twenty years passed before they renewed their friendship.

### The Lesser of Republican Evils

As the election of 1800 approached, the split between Adams and Hamilton widened. Both agreed on the necessity of dumping Jefferson as vice president, and on putting forward Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, hero of the XYZ affair, to replace him. But, having gotten Pinckney into the Electoral College balloting, Hamilton again tried to steal the election. As in 1796, he advised delegates to withhold votes, but this time he engaged in direct lobbying, even writing a pamphlet in which, in violation of the Sedition Act, he questioned Adams's suitability for the presidency.

Hamilton's methods backfired again: Federalists cast one more vote for Adams than for Pinckney. But more important, Hamilton's scheming and his faction's consistent promanufacturing stance had so alienated southern Federalists that many chose to support Jefferson. With Jefferson pulling in the southern vote and his running mate—Burr again—pulling in the craftsmen and small-farm vote in New York and Pennsylvania, the Republicans outscored the Federalists by sixteen votes in the Electoral College. But that still did not settle the election. Burr and Jefferson won the same number of electoral votes (see Map 8.1). The tie threw the election into the House of Representatives.

Ironically, it fell to the **lame duck** Federalists in the House to choose between two men most of them viewed as dangerous radicals bent on destroying the Federalists' hard work. Indecision was plain: in ballot after ballot over six grueling days, neither Jefferson nor Burr could win the necessary majority. But Hamilton convinced several Federalists that even though Jefferson's rhetoric was dangerous, the Virginian was a gentleman of property and integrity, whereas Burr was "the most dangerous man of the community." Meanwhile, Virginia and Pennsylvania mobilized their militias, intent on preventing a "legislative usurpation" of the popular will. As Delaware senator James Bayard described the situation, "we must risk the Constitution and a Civil War or take Mr. Jefferson." Finally, on the thirty-sixth ballot, on February 17, 1801, Jefferson emerged as the winner.

Not long after Jefferson's election, both parties aligned briefly to pass the **Twelfth Amendment** to the Constitution (ratified in 1804), which requires separate balloting in the Electoral College for president and vice president, thereby preventing deadlocks like the one that nearly wrecked the nation in 1800.

### Federalist Defenses and a Loyal Opposition

The Federalists were not about to leave office without erecting some defenses for the political and economic machinery they had constructed. The Federalist-controlled judiciary, which had proved its clout during the controversy over the

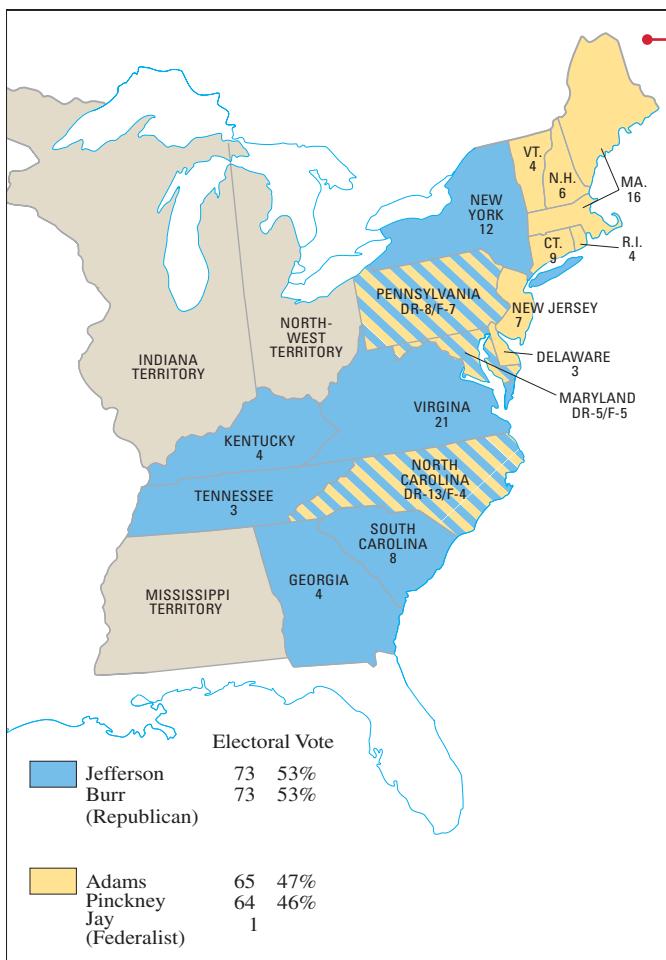
Alien and Sedition Acts, appeared to offer the strongest bulwark to prevent Republicans from tampering with the Constitution. Thus, during their last days in office, the outgoing Federalists in Congress passed the **Judiciary Act of 1801**, which created sixteen

**lame duck** An officeholder who has failed to win, or is ineligible for, reelection but whose term in office has not yet ended.

### Twelfth Amendment

Constitutional amendment, ratified in 1804, that provides for separate balloting in the Electoral College for president and vice president.

**Judiciary Act of 1801** Law that the Federalist Congress passed to increase the number of federal courts and judicial positions; President Adams rushed to fill these positions with Federalists before his term ended.

**MAP 8.1** Election of 1800

The political partnership between Jefferson and Burr allowed the Republicans to unseat Federalist John Adams in the election of 1800. As this map shows, only New England voted as a bloc for the Federalist, whereas Burr's political home, New York, went entirely to Jefferson.

new federal judgeships, six additional **circuit courts**, and a massive structure of **federal marshals** and clerks. President Adams then rushed to fill all of these positions with loyal Federalists, signing appointments until midnight on his last day in office. The appointments came in such large numbers and so late in the day that **John Marshall**, Adams's secretary of state, was unable to deliver all the appointment letters before his own term ran out. But Marshall did deliver one letter promptly: the one addressed to himself, making him chief justice of the Supreme Court.

Because of the ill will evident in the Alien and Sedition Acts and the presidential electioneering, Jefferson's inaugural address was consciously **conciliatory**. "We are all Republicans; we are all Federalists," Jefferson said, seeming to abandon partisan politics and align himself with those who had recently labeled him a "brandy-soaked defamer of churches" and a "contemptible hypocrite." In his mind, all Americans shared the same fundamental principles—the principles of 1776. But even Jefferson considered the election of 1800 a revolution—"as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form."

As a result of Jefferson's reassuring address, the nation began to share the president's view that "every difference of opinion is not a difference of principles." Even extreme Federalists such as Fisher Ames came to understand that a "party is an association of honest

**circuit court** A court of appeals that has the power to review and either uphold or overturn decisions made by lower courts; in terms of authority, these stand between federal district courts and the Supreme Court.

**federal marshal** A law enforcement officer who works directly for the federal district court; each district court has one marshal, who in turn employs a staff of deputies to carry out orders from the court.

**John Marshall** Virginia lawyer and politician whom President Adams made chief justice of the Supreme Court; his legal decisions helped shape the role of the Supreme Court in American government.

**conciliatory** Striving to overcome distrust or to regain goodwill.



# It Matters Today

## CLASSICAL VERSUS LIBERAL REPUBLICANISM

Political disputes that took place in this country over almost two centuries ago remain at the core of national discussion today. One of these has to do with the proper role of a republican government. "Classical" republicans like Hamilton saw the power of the state as the sole defense against dangerous forces from abroad and lawlessness at home. "Liberal" republicans like Jefferson claimed that the state itself was the most serious threat to freedom. Classical republicans accused their liberal counterparts of promoting anarchy: John Rutledge, for example, asserted in the House of Representatives in 1798 that liberals "believe it to be their duty to do all in their power to overturn the whole system . . . , they may think a French army and a French invasion necessary." John Nicholas countered, saying "More evil is to be apprehended in this country from the

**votaries** of despotism, than from the votaries of France." These charges and counter charges will sound familiar to generations of Americans who have continued to debate which form of republicanism, classical or liberal, is the true basis of our American political tradition.

- Reflect upon Jefferson's inaugural assertion that "every difference of opinion is not a difference of principles" by applying it to the debate between classical and liberal republicans in the years directly following the "Revolution of 1800."
- Identify a moment in U.S. history since 1800 when this debate again became a serious issue in national politics. How were the conflicts resolved in that later situation?

**votaries** Strict loyalists to a particular ideology.

**opposition party** Political party opposed to the party or government in power.

men for honest purposes, and when the State falls into bad hands, is the only efficient defense; a champion who never flinches, a watchman who never sleeps." Ames went on to describe how a loyal **opposition party** should behave. "We must act as good citizens, using only truth, and argument, and zeal to impress them." With parties such as these, a system of loyal opposition could become a permanent part of a republican government without risk to security or freedom. And in keeping with the two-party spirit and Jefferson's philosophical commitment to free speech, Congress let the Sedition Act and the Alien Acts expire in 1801 and 1802. It also repealed the Naturalization Act, replacing its fourteen-year probationary interval with a five-year naturalization period.

Confident in Americans' ability to reason, Jefferson outlined a plan for a "wise and frugal government" that would seek "equal and exact justice to all men of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political." He would, he said, support state governments "in all their rights" but would not tear down the federal structure or fail to pay its debts.

### Jefferson's Vision for America

Jefferson had a strong, positive vision for the nation, and the party made every effort to put his policies into effect. The greatest dangers to a republic, he believed, were (1) high population density and the social evils it generated and (2) the concentration of money and power in the hands of a few. Accordingly, Jefferson wanted to steer America away from the large-scale, publicly supported industry so dear to Hamilton and toward an economy founded on yeoman farmers—men who owned their own land, produced their own food, and were beholden to no one. Such men, Jefferson believed, could make political decisions based solely on pure reason and good sense.

But Jefferson was not naive. He knew Americans would continue to demand the comforts and luxuries found in industrial societies. His solution was simple. In America's

vast lands, he said, a nation of farmers could produce so much food that “its surplus [could] go to nourish the now perishing births of Europe, who in return would manufacture and send us in exchange our clothes and other comforts.” Overpopulation and **urbanization**—the twin causes of corruption in Europe—would not occur in America, for here, Jefferson said, “the immense extent of uncultivated and fertile lands enables every one who will labor, to marry young, and to raise a family of any size.”

Making such a system work, however, required a radical change in economic policy. The government would have to let businesses make their own decisions and succeed or fail in a marketplace free of government interference. In an economy with absolutely free trade and an open marketplace, the iron law of **supply and demand** would determine the cost of goods and services. This view of the economy was a direct assault on mercantilist notions of governments controlling prices and restricting trade to benefit the nation-state.

**urbanization** The growth of cities in a nation or region and the shifting of the population from rural to urban areas.

**supply and demand** The two factors that determine price in an economy based on private property: (1) how much of a commodity is available (supply) and (2) how many people want it (demand).

## Republicanism in Action

- ★ How did Republicans deal with the defenses that Federalists put in place in 1801?
- ★ What policies did Jefferson pursue to carry out his vision for the country? What obstacles did he encounter?

When Jefferson assumed office, he ushered a new spirit into national politics and the presidency. A combination of circumstances moved him to lead a much simpler life than had his predecessors. For one thing, he was the first president to be inaugurated in the new national capital, the still largely uncompleted Washington City, which afforded quite different and much more limited **amenities**. Washington lacked the taverns, **salons**, and entertaining social circles that both previous capitals, New York and Philadelphia, had offered. Personal preferences also moved him in a simpler direction. He refused to ride in a carriage, choosing to go by horseback through Washington’s muddy streets. He continued to give parties as he had done in Paris, but he sat his guests at a round table so that no one might be seen as more important than the others. He abandoned the fashion of wearing a wig, letting his red hair stand out, and he sometimes entertained with startling informality, wearing frayed slippers and work clothes.

But this show of simplicity and his conciliatory inaugural address were somewhat misleading. Jefferson was a hardworking partisan politician and administrator whose main objective was to turn the nation around to his vision of republican virtue with all possible speed. He quickly launched a program to revamp the American economy and give the United States a place in the international community. Along the way, he captured many Americans’ affection and their political loyalty but also alienated those who lacked his zeal.

**amenities** Conveniences, comforts, and services.

**salon** A gathering place, generally in a private home, where people came together to discuss their common interests; in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these were often the places where politicians gathered to discuss philosophy and policy issues.

### Assault on Federalist Defenses

Aware of the partisan purpose behind the Judiciary Act of 1801 and Adams’s midnight appointments, Republicans chose to wage an equally aggressive partisan war to reverse Federalist control of the justice system. In January 1802, Re-

publicans in Congress proposed the repeal of the 1801 Judiciary Act, arguing that the new circuit courts were outrageously expensive and unnecessary. Federalists countered that if Congress repealed the act, it would in effect be terminating judges for reasons other than the “high crimes and misdemeanors” mentioned in the Constitution, thereby

Suffering a lifelong sensitivity to cold as well as a dislike for formality, Jefferson usually chose to dress practically, in fairly plain clothes that kept him warm. This 1822 portrait by Thomas Sully captures the former president in his customary greatcoat, unadorned suit, and well-worn boots. "Thomas Jefferson" by Thomas Sully. West Point Museum, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.



violating the separation of powers. Congress proceeded anyway, replacing the Judiciary Act of 1801 with the Judiciary Act of 1802, and awaited the response of the Federalist courts.

**constitutionality** Accordance with the principles or provisions of the Constitution.

**justice of the peace** The lowest level of judge in some state court systems, usually responsible for hearing small claims and minor criminal cases; because Washington, the District of Columbia, is a federal territory rather than a state, the justice of the peace for that district is a federal appointee.

**Marbury v. Madison** Supreme Court decision (1803) declaring part of the Judiciary Act of 1789 unconstitutional, thereby establishing an important precedent in favor of judicial review.

The **constitutionality** of the new Judiciary Act was never tested, but the power of the judicial branch to interpret and enforce federal law did become a major issue the following year. On taking office, Jefferson's secretary of state, James Madison, held back the appointment letters that John Marshall had been unable to deliver before the expiration of his term. One jilted appointee was William Marbury, who was to have been **justice of the peace** for the newly created District of Columbia. Marbury, with the support of his party, filed suit in the Supreme Court. According to Marbury, the Judiciary Act of 1789 gave the federal courts the power to order the executive branch to deliver his appointment.

*Marbury v. Madison* was Chief Justice Marshall's first major case, and in it he proved his political as well as his judicial ingenuity. Marshall was keenly aware that in a direct confrontation between the executive and judicial branches, the judiciary was sure to lose. Rather than risking a serious blow to the dignity of the Supreme Court, Marshall ruled in 1803 that the Constitution contained no provision for the Supreme Court to issue such orders as the Judiciary Act of 1789 required and that therefore the law was unconstitutional.

This decision put Jefferson and Madison in a difficult political position. On one hand, the authors of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were on record for arguing that the states and not the courts should determine the constitutionality of federal laws. But political realities forced them to accept Marshall's decision in this case if

they wanted to block Adams's handpicked men from assuming lifetime appointments in powerful judicial positions. Although this **precedent** for **judicial review** did not immediately invalidate the principles set forth in Jefferson's and Madison's earlier **manifestos**, it established the standard that federal courts, rather than states, could decide the constitutionality of acts of Congress.

Marshall's decision in *Marbury v. Madison* gave the Republicans the power to withhold undelivered letters of appointment from the Adams administration, but it gave them no power to control the behavior of judges whose appointments were already official. Thus, in the aftermath of the Marbury decision, Republican radicals in Congress decided to take aim at particularly partisan Federalist judges.

John Pickering of New Hampshire was an easy first target. A mentally ill alcoholic, he was known to rave incoherently both on and off the bench, usually about the evils of Jefferson and liberal republicanism. No one, not even staunch Federalists, doubted that the besotted man was incompetent, but it was far from certain that he had committed the "high crimes and misdemeanors" for which he was **impeached** in 1803. Whether he had or not, the Senate found him guilty and removed him from office.

Emboldened by that easy victory and armed with a powerful precedent, radical Republicans took on Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase. Chase was notorious for making partisan decisions and for using the federal bench as an anti-Republican soapbox. Unlike Pickering, Chase defended himself very competently, making the political motivations behind the impeachment effort obvious to all observers. In the end, both Federalists and many Republicans voted to dismiss the charges, returning Chase to his position on the Supreme Court. The failure to impeach Chase demonstrated that the political structure was not going to tip decisively to either side and made Jefferson's inaugural statement of principle a guideline for political reality: both sides would have to compromise in charting the course for the nation.

### Implementing a New Economy

Still, Republicans were determined on one partisan agenda item: tearing down Hamilton's economic structure and replacing it with a new one more consistent with Jefferson's vision. Responsibility for planning and implementing this

economic policy fell to Treasury Secretary **Albert Gallatin**. Gallatin's first effort as secretary of the treasury was to try to settle the nation's debts. With Jefferson's approval, Gallatin implemented a radical course of budget cutting, going so far as to close several American embassies overseas to save money. The administration also cut the military by half, reducing the army from four thousand to twenty-five hundred men and the navy from twenty-five ships to a mere seven, a dangerous gamble for an administration dedicated to free trade.

But Gallatin's cost cutting did much more than just reduce the national budget. First, Gallatin was able to mask the firing of loyal Federalists still employed in civil service in a seemingly nonpartisan appeal to fiscal responsibility. He accomplished another ideological goal by reducing the overall federal presence, putting more responsibilities onto the states, where his and Jefferson's philosophy said they belonged. In addition, Gallatin's plan called for a significant change in how the government raised money. In 1802 the Republican Congress repealed all **internal taxes**, leaving customs duties and the sale of western lands as the sole sources of federal revenue. With this one sweeping gesture, Gallatin struck a major blow for Jefferson's economic vision by tying the nation's financial future to westward expansion and foreign trade. But this vision would soon face serious challenges.

**precedent** An event or decision that may be used as an example in similar cases later on.

**judicial review** The power of the Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of laws passed by Congress and by the states.

**manifesto** A written statement publicly declaring the views of its author.

**impeach** To formally charge a public official with criminal conduct in office; once the House of Representatives has impeached a federal official, the official is then tried in the Senate on the stated charges.

**Albert Gallatin** Treasury secretary in Jefferson's administration; he favored limited government and reduced the federal debt by cutting spending.

**internal taxes** Taxes collected directly from citizens, like Alexander Hamilton's various excise taxes, as opposed to tariffs or other taxes collected in connection with foreign trade.

### Threats to Jefferson's Vision

One threat to Jefferson's commitment to foreign trade came from pirates who patrolled the northern coast of Africa from Tangier to Tripoli, controlling access to the Mediterranean Sea. By 1800, fully one-fifth of the U.S. federal budget was

being spent on bribing these Barbary pirates not to attack American ships. To Jefferson, principle was as important as financial considerations. Asserting presidential privilege as commander in chief, he dispatched navy ships to the Mediterranean in 1801. The war that followed was a fiasco from anyone's point of view. Jefferson's navy suffered a major defeat with the capture of a prize warship, the *Philadelphia*, and its entire crew. In 1805, the United States finally negotiated peace terms, agreeing to pay \$60,000 for the release of the hostages and accepting the pirates' promise to stop raiding American shipping. In the meantime, France and Spain posed a serious threat to Jefferson's dream of rapid westward expansion. As settlers continued to pour into the region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, the commercial importance of that inland waterway increased. Whoever controlled the mouth of the Mississippi—the place where it flows past New Orleans and into the Gulf of Mexico and the open seas—would have the power to make or break the interior economy.

In accordance with the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795), Spain had granted American farmers the right to ship cargoes down the Mississippi without paying tolls, and permitted American merchants to **transship** goods from New Orleans to Atlantic ports without paying export duties. In 1800, however, Napoleon had traded some of France's holdings in southern Europe to Spain in exchange for Spain's land in North America. The United States had no agreement with France concerning navigation on the Mississippi, so the deal between Spain and France threatened to scuttle American commerce on the river. Anxiety over this issue turned to outright panic when, preparatory to the transfer of the land to France, Spanish officials suspended free trade in New Orleans.

Jefferson responded on two fronts. Backing away from his usual anti-British position, he announced, "The day France takes possession of New Orleans we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation," and he dispatched James Monroe to talk with the British about a military alliance. He also had Monroe instruct the American minister to France, Robert Livingston, that he could spend as much as \$2 million to try to purchase New Orleans and as much adjacent real estate as possible.

Napoleon was considering the creation of a Caribbean empire when he acquired Louisiana from Spain. Rich with sugar, the Caribbean colony of **Saint Domingue** was the centerpiece of Bonaparte's scheme. The colony had been the most lucrative European holding in the Americas before 1791, when a rebel army under the leadership of a former slave named **François Dominique Toussaint Louverture** rose in revolt and liberated the colony's enslaved majority. In hopes of maintaining control of the colony, revolutionary France named Louverture governor, but in 1802 Napoleon betrayed him by sending an invasion force to reclaim Saint Domingue. Planning to force the colony's slaves back into sugar production, Bonaparte would require the Louisiana region as a granary.

The French army was able to defeat and capture Louverture, but no more. The rebels' military skills and yellow fever, malaria, and other tropical diseases destroyed the French force. Stymied in the Caribbean, Napoleon had no need of the Louisiana breadbasket. Thus, by the time Monroe and Livingston entered into negotiations with the French in 1803, Napoleon had instructed Foreign Minister Talleyrand to offer the whole of Louisiana to the Americans for \$15 million.

**tranship** The practice of shipping cargo to a secondary port and then transferring it to other ships for transport to a final destination; cargos from up the Mississippi River were shipped by barge to New Orleans and then loaded onto ocean-going vessels to be carried to American ports along the Atlantic coast.

**Saint Domingue** French colony in the western half of the Caribbean island named Hispaniola by Christopher Columbus; it is today the modern nation of Haiti.

**François Dominique Toussaint Louverture** Black revolutionary who liberated the French colony of Saint Domingue, only to see it reinvaded by the French in 1802.

## Pushing Westward

Although Livingston and Monroe had been authorized to spend only \$2 million for the purchase of Louisiana, they jumped at the deal offered by Talleyrand, hoping that the president would approve. The president in fact was overjoyed.

The deal contained three important benefits for Jefferson and the nation. It removed one European power—France—from the continent and saved Jefferson from having to ally the United States with Britain. It secured the Mississippi River for shipments of American agricultural products to industrial Europe. And it doubled the size of the United States, opening uncharted new expanses for settlement by farmers.

The **Louisiana Purchase** was immensely popular among most Americans, but it raised significant ideological and constitutional questions. Some Federalists and Republicans questioned whether the United States could acquire this territory and its many residents without becoming an empire; something entirely at war with the rhetoric of our Revolution against the British. To this Jefferson responded by spinning the term *empire* into the phrase “empire of liberty,” emphasizing that the new territory would aid yeomen by securing and extending the benefits of the revolutionary tradition. Members of both parties also pointed out that the Constitution made no provision for the acquisition of new territories by the United States, and that the nation could not extend westward beyond its then-current boundaries without constitutional authorization. Jefferson responded by submitting a constitutional amendment to Congress authorizing such acquisitions, which the Senate finally decided to ignore. Congress voted overwhelmingly for ratification of the treaty in November 1803.

Even before the Louisiana Purchase, when rumors of the land transfer between France and Spain began circulating, Jefferson had started preparations to send a covert spy mission into the area. Jefferson confidentially instructed his private secretary, **Meriwether Lewis**, to form a party that would pretend to be on a scientific mission. The group’s primary purpose, however, would be to note the numbers of French, Spanish, and other agents in the area and to chart major waterways and other important strategic sites (see Map 8.2). They were also to promote direct dealings between the Indians and the United States, undermining the Indians’ relations with the Spanish and French whenever possible.

Lewis, his co-commander **William Clark**, and the rest of the Corps of Discovery set out by boat in the spring of 1804. Pushing up the Missouri River, the party arrived among the Mandan Indians in present-day North Dakota in the late fall. Their decision to winter among the Mandans may have ensured the expedition’s success. The Mandans were a settled agricultural group who had been farming along the upper Missouri for over a thousand years and, unlike many of their neighbors, had not abandoned their villages for mounted buffalo hunting. Their villages, which offered food and shelter for the wandering hunting tribes, soon became hubs in the evolving Plains trading and raiding system. By wintering with the Mandans, the expedition came into contact with many of the Indian and European groups that participated in the complex economy of the West. Lewis and Clark acted on Jefferson’s instructions by learning all they could from the Mandans and their visitors about the fur trade, the nature of military alliances, and the tribes that lived farther west.

Importantly, during the Mandan winter Lewis and Clark made contact with a French trapper named Charbonneau and his Shoshone wife, **Sacajawea**. Between the two of them, Sacajawea and Charbonneau spoke several of the languages understood by the Indians in the Far West and possessed knowledge about the geography of the area. With

**Louisiana Purchase** The U.S. purchase of Louisiana from France for \$15 million in 1803; the Territory extended from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains.

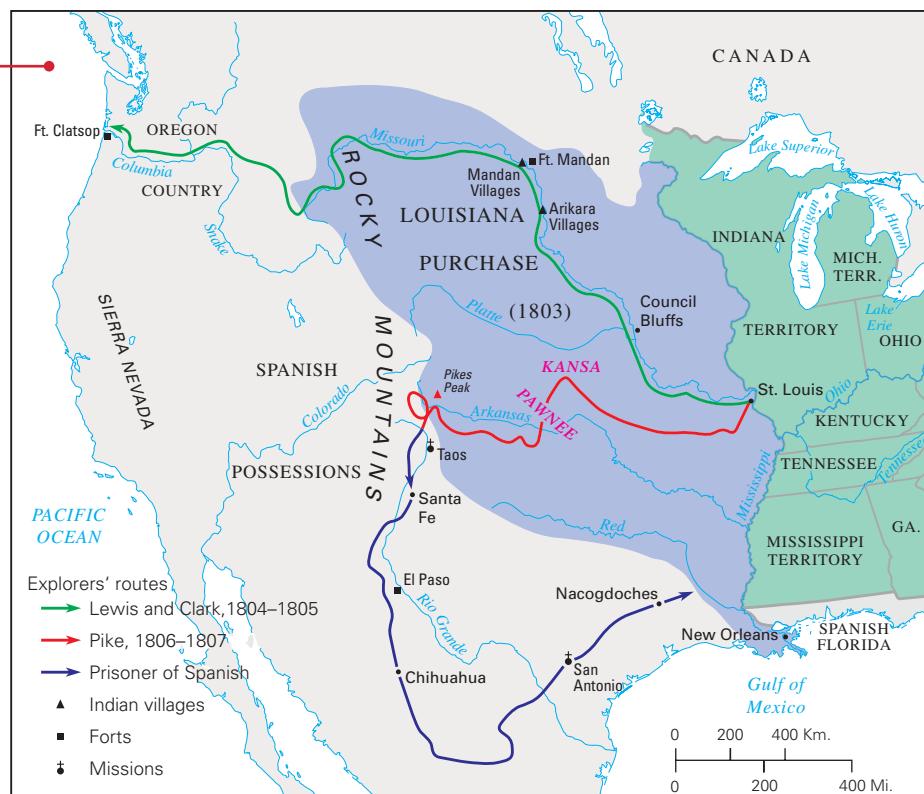
**Meriwether Lewis** Jefferson aide who was sent to explore the Louisiana Territory in 1803; he later served as its governor.

**William Clark** Soldier and explorer who joined Meriwether Lewis as co-leader on the expedition to explore the Louisiana Territory; he was responsible for mapmaking.

**Sacajawea** Shoshone woman who served as guide and interpreter on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

**MAP 8.2 Louisiana Purchase and American Exploration**

As this map shows, Jefferson added an enormous tract of land to the United States when he purchased Louisiana from France in 1803. The president sent two exploration teams into the West. In addition to collecting information, Lewis and Clark's and Pike's expeditions sought to ally Indians with the United States at the expense of the French, Spanish, and British, even in those areas that were not officially part of the United States.



their help, Lewis and Clark were able to obtain aid from the Shoshones in crossing the Rocky Mountains. From there, the expedition passed from Indian group to Indian group along a chain of friendship. Historians have traditionally emphasized how Sacajawea aided Lewis and Clark but have failed to note the irony that in doing so, she was inadvertently helping to open the West to settlement and eastern economic development. By following her chain of Indian hospitality, the expedition finally reached the Pacific Ocean in November 1805, thus staking a claim to the Pacific Northwest and providing a future American window into trade with Asia.

In a second “scientific” exploration, in 1806 Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike set out to explore the territory between the Missouri and Red Rivers south of Lewis and Clark’s route. His party boldly journeyed into Spanish New Mexico, where they were captured by a Spanish army detachment and held for three months before being escorted back to the United States.

## Challenge and Uncertainty in Jefferson’s America

- ★ **How did the life of the average American change during Jefferson’s presidency?**
- ★ **What place did Native Americans and African Americans have in the America Jefferson envisioned? How did each of these groups respond to these roles?**

Jefferson’s policies brought a new spirit into the land. The Virginian’s commitment to opportunity and progress, to openness and frugality, offered a stark contrast in approach and style to the policies of his predecessors. The congressional elections of 1802 and the

presidential election in 1804 proved Jefferson's popularity and the Republican Party's strong appeal. Nevertheless, some disturbing social and intellectual undercurrents began to surface during his second term. National expansion strained conventional social institutions as white farmers, entrepreneurs, and adventurers seized the opportunities that Republican policies offered. Adding to the strain was the fact that the Jeffersonian spirit was more of a promise than a commitment and that Jefferson's vision for the republic excluded many.

### The Religious Response to Social Change

As new territories opened in the West, young people streamed into the region at a rate that alarmed many. This had an unsettling effect on communities they left behind in the East. In the West, the odd mixture of ethnic, religious, and national groups; and fragile transportation and communications, brought social instability and economic uncertainty.

The changes taking place in the young republic stirred conflicting religious currents. One was liberalism in religious thought. The other was a new **evangelicalism**.

Liberal religious thought was born of the Enlightenment in France, Scotland, and England, and emphasized the connection between **rationalism** and faith. To rationalists like both Jefferson and Adams, the possibility that a being as perfect as God might behave irrationally was unthinkable. In fact, for such men, the more plain, reasonable, and verifiable religious claims were, the more likely it was that they emanated from God. Less perfect than God, it was man who had cluttered the plain, revealed truth with irrational claims and insolvable mysteries. For his part, Jefferson was so convinced of this logic that he edited his own version of the Bible, keeping only the moral principles and the solid historical facts and discarding anything supernatural.

This liberal creed led many, including Jefferson, to abandon organized religion altogether. Not all liberals were so quick to bolt organized worship, however. John Adams, for example, continued to adhere to New England Congregationalism, but he and others used their influence to promote a young and more liberal clergy who sought to insert a heavy dose of rationalism into the old Puritan structure. Rejecting such traditional mysteries as the **Trinity** and the literal divinity of Christ, a so-called **Unitarian** movement emerged and expanded inside Congregational churches. Indeed, Unitarians in New England were able to engineer the election of their own **Henry Ware** as the senior professor of theology at Harvard College, formerly the educational heart of orthodox Calvinist America. Though outraged, more traditional Congregationalists did little immediately to oust liberals from their churches. In the decades to come, however, doctrinal disagreements between the parties led to virtual religious warfare.

While rationalism and Unitarianism were gaining strong footholds in eastern cities, missionary activities helped to foster a very different kind of religious response in the West. Although Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and evangelical Congregationalists disagreed on many specific principles, they all emphasized the spirited preaching that could bring about the emotional moment of conversion—the moment of realization that without the saving grace of God, every soul is lost. Each of these denominations concentrated on training a new, young ministry and sending it to preach in every corner of the nation. In this way, another religious awakening swept across America, beginning in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801 and spreading throughout the South and West.

In hopes of bringing social stability to the frontier, these new evangelists emphasized the importance of Christian community. Dressed in frontier garb, these stump preachers spread their democratized religion across the West through a series of camp meetings.

**evangelicalism** A Protestant religious persuasion that emphasizes the literal truth of the Gospels and salvation through faith alone; in the early nineteenth century, it became infused with increasing amounts of romantic emotionalism and an emphasis on converting others.

**rationalism** The theory that the exercise of reason, rather than the acceptance of authority or spiritual revelation, is the only valid basis for belief and the best source of spiritual truth.

**Trinity** The Christian belief that God consists of three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Unitarian** A religion that denies the Trinity, teaching that God exists only in one person; it also stresses individual freedom of belief and the free use of reason in religion.

**Henry Ware** Liberal Congregationalist who was elected senior theologian at Harvard College in 1805, making Unitarianism the dominant religious view at the previously Calvinist stronghold.

Evangelical denominations gained ever wider followings during the early nineteenth century as the uncertainties accompanying rapid expansion took their toll on national self-confidence. Mass baptisms like this one painted by Russian tourist Pavel Svinin celebrated the emotional moment of conversion and the individual's rebirth as a Christian. The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY



Abandoning the staid religiosity of their fathers, dozens of dynamic young evangelicals tramped the frontier, and worked to counterbalance the forces of extreme individualism and social disorder by providing ideological underpinnings for the expansive behavior of westerners. They also provided an institutional framework that brought some stability to communities in which traditional controls were lacking. These attractive features helped evangelicalism to sweep across the frontier.

### The Problem of Race in Jefferson's Republic

The “born again” frontiersmen counted themselves good Republicans, but Jefferson’s policies did not appeal to everyone. Because Republican legislation favored southern and western agrarians, neither Native Americans nor African Americans fared as well under Jefferson’s administration as they had under his Federalist predecessors. A slaveholder himself, Jefferson expressed strong views about African Americans. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), Jefferson asserted that blacks were “inferior to whites in the endowments both of body and mind.” Even when presented with direct evidence of superior black intellectual accomplishments, Jefferson remained unmoved. When the well-respected African American mathematician, astronomer, and engineer Benjamin Banneker sent a copy of an almanac he had prepared to Jefferson, the Virginian privately told a friend, “I have a long letter from Banneker, which shows him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed.” He went on to suggest that the almanac had actually been written by a white engineer who was intent on “puffing” Banneker’s reputation.

Jefferson was convinced, and stated publicly on many occasions, that the white and black races could not live together without inevitably polluting both. This was the key reason for what little opposition he voiced to slavery and for his continued involvement in various projects to remove African Americans by colonizing them in Africa. Despite this attitude, he kept a slave mistress, Sally Hemings, by whom he fathered six children. Like other men of his century and his social class, Jefferson was convinced that women,

like slaves, existed to serve and entertain men. His relationship with Hemings, who was the half-sister of Jefferson's deceased wife, appeared no more unequal or unnatural than his marriage. But while the liaison may have seemed perfectly natural behind closed doors, the racial code to which Jefferson gave voice in his various publications and official utterances defined it as entirely unacceptable in public. This rigid separation between public and private behavior led Jefferson to keep the relationship secret, and his friends and family joined together in a conspiracy of silence. This, too, reflected broader social ambiguities, contradictions that defined the sex lives of masters and slaves in Jefferson's South.

Throughout the Jeffersonian era, the great majority of African Americans lived in that South, and most of them were slaves. But from the 1790s onward, the number of free blacks increased steadily. Emancipation did not bring equality, however, even in northern states. Most states did not permit free blacks to testify in court, vote, or exercise other fundamental freedoms accorded to whites. Public schools often refused admission to black children. Even churches were often closed to blacks who wished to worship.

Some African Americans responded to this systematic exclusion by expressing their cultural and social identity in forming their own institutions. In Philadelphia, tension between white and free black Methodists led former slave Richard Allen to form the Bethel Church for Negro Methodists in 1793. Two years later, Allen became the first black deacon ordained in America. Ongoing tension with the white Methodist hierarchy, however, eventually led Allen to secede from the church and form his own **African Methodist Episcopal Church** (Bethel) in 1816. Similar controversies in New York led black divine James Varick to found an African Methodist Episcopal Church (Zion) in that city in 1821. Despite such efforts, the overall racial atmosphere in Jefferson's America significantly limited the number of African American leaders who attained positions of wealth or influence.

Jefferson thought differently of Native Americans than he did of African Americans. He considered Indians to be "savages" but was not convinced that they were biologically inferior to Europeans: "They are formed in mind as well as in body, on the same module with the 'Homo Sapiens Europaeus,'" he said. Jefferson attributed the differences between Indians and Europeans to what he termed the *Indians' cultural retardation*. He was confident that if whites lifted Indians out of their uncivilized state and put them on an equal footing with Europeans, Indian populations would grow, their physical condition would improve, and they would be able to participate in the yeoman republic on an equal footing with whites. Critics noted, however, that Jefferson was careful not to apply similar environmental tests to blacks, since successful efforts at cultural elevation would erase any rationale for their enslavement.

To implement his policy, Jefferson created a series of government-owned trading posts at which Indians were offered goods at cheap prices. He believed that Indians who were exposed to white manufactures would come to agree that white culture was superior and would make the rational decision to adopt that culture wholesale. At the same time, both the government and right-minded philanthropists should engage in instructing Native Americans in European methods of farming, ensuring that these former "savages" would emerge as good, Republican-voting frontier farmers. Until this process of **acculturation** was complete, however, Jefferson believed the Indians, like children, should be protected from those who might take advantage of them or lead them astray. Also like children, the Indians were not to be trusted to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Indian rights were left to the whims of the Senate—which drafted and ratified Indian treaties—and of the army—which enforced those treaties.

**African Methodist Episcopal Church** African American branch of Methodism established in Philadelphia in 1816 and in New York in 1821.

**acculturation** Changes in the culture of a group or an individual as a result of contact with a different culture.

# Investigating America

## Jefferson's Notes and Slavery, 1785

In his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), Jefferson wrestled with the question of how a country built on liberty and freedom could hold roughly one-fifth of its population in bondage. His answer was that Africans and their offspring were biologically and intellectually different from Europeans, and that "black blood" was inferior to that carried by whites. In Query XIV, he explained why once liberated, slaves could not remain in the United States.

.....

**I**t will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the state, and thus save the expence of supplying, by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.—To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral. The first difference which strikes us is that of colour .... Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race? Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their own judgment in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species....

They seem to require less sleep. A black, after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from

a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous .... But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never see even an elementary trait, of painting or sculpture .... I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind .... The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.

.....

- To what extent was Jefferson trying to convince himself that African Americans were genetically inferior to whites?
- Jefferson was both brilliant and highly educated, yet what inconsistencies and problems of logic do you find in this passage?
- His relationship with Sally Hemings lay in the future, but did it matter that Sally was a light-skinned slave, three-quarters white?



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Unlike many of his contemporaries, Jefferson was convinced that the American Indians could eventually become full participants in the American republic. Members of the "Five Civilized Tribes" (Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole) often owned large plantations and practiced lifestyles not unlike those of their white neighbors. Unfortunately, Jefferson's hopes fell before the racism and greed of white settlers. Even sophisticated leaders like Cherokee chief Tah Chee, pictured here, were driven from their land; he and his band eventually took up residence in Texas to escape persecution in their native Arkansas. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. [LC-USZC4-12427].

The chief problem for Jeffersonian Indian policy was not the Indians' supposed cultural retardation but their rapid modernization. Among groups such as the Cherokees and Creeks, members of a rising new elite led their people toward greater prosperity and diplomatic independence. Although Jefferson should have greeted such acculturation with enthusiasm, the Indians' white neighbors generally did not. Fearing all-out war between the states and the Indians, Jefferson advanced an alternative. Having acquired Louisiana, Jefferson suggested the creation of large reserves to which Indians currently residing in the East could relocate, taking themselves out of state jurisdictions and removing themselves from the corrupting influence of the "baser elements" of white society. Although he did not advocate the use of force to move Indians west of the Mississippi, he made every effort to convince them to migrate. This idea of segregating Native Americans from other Americans formed the basis for Indian policy for the rest of the century.

# Summary

Americans faced a difficult choice in 1796: to continue in a Federalist direction with Adams or to move into new and uncharted regions of republicanism with Jefferson. Factionalism and voter indecision led to Adams's election as president and Jefferson's as vice president. The split outcome frightened Federalists, and they used every excuse to make war on their political opponents. Diplomatically, they entered into an undeclared war with France. At home, they used repressive measures such as the Alien and Sedition Acts to try to silence opponents. Reminded of what they had rebelled against in the Revolution, in 1800 the American people decided to give Jefferson and the Republicans a chance.

Whereas Jefferson called the election "the revolution of 1800," Federalists stacked the federal courts in an effort to prevent Republicans from changing government too much. At the same time, they organized themselves into a true political party, an ever-present watchdog on the activities of their rivals.

Jefferson's inaugural address in 1801 announced an end to partisan warfare, but both Madison and hard-line Republicans in Congress attempted to restrict Federalist power in the court system. The Republican program,

however, was not entirely negative. Jefferson looked toward a future in which most Americans could own enough land to produce life's necessities for themselves and were beholden to no one and thus free to vote as their consciences and rationality dictated. To attain this end, Jefferson ordered massive reductions in the size of government, the elimination of internal federal taxes, and rapid westward expansion, including the purchase of the vast territory called Louisiana. For some, the outcome was a spirit of excitement and optimism, but not everyone was so hopeful. Jefferson clearly wanted most Americans to share in the bounty of an expanded nation, but not all were free to share equally. For American Indians, the very success of Jefferson's expansion policy meant a contraction of their freedom. African Americans also found that the equality Jefferson promised to others was not intended for them, though men like Benjamin Banneker grasped for it anyway. As for women, Jefferson himself observed, "The appointment of a woman to office is an innovation for which the public is not prepared, nor am I." Women were encouraged to play an active role in the new nation but were expected to do so only through their traditional roles as wives and mothers.

## Key Terms

**Aaron Burr**, p. 175

**Thomas Pinckney**, p. 175

**statesman**, p. 175

**factionalism**, p. 175

**James Monroe**, p. 176

**Charles Cotesworth Pinckney**, p. 176

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**XYZ affair**, p. 177

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# Increasing Conflict and War

## 1805–1815

# CHAPTER

## 9

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Tecumseh

In the opening days of the nineteenth century, most Americans believed the Native Americans were doomed to extinction. History mandated that the Indians would vanish and that European Americans would inherit their land. The Indians disagreed, and one of their most prominent leaders, Tecumseh, did as much as possible to stop the loss of Indian land that whites deemed inevitable.

Tecumseh stood in stark contrast to dominant white theories about Indian life. Whites thought of Indians living in isolated and constantly warring tribes, yet Tecumseh's parents came from different tribes: his father was a Shawnee from Ohio and his mother was a Creek from Alabama. In the sophisticated Indian world of the American interior, peaceful visitations between tribes were common, as were intergroup marriages.

A combination of his family connections and a distinguished military career led to Tecumseh's emergence as war chief in the late 1780s, and he played a key role in the continuing defense against American incursions. But defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 temporarily broke the Indian defenses. Taking advantage of Indian vulnerability, American agents used a combination of bribery, coercion, and outright violence to convince **civil chiefs** (see next page) to cede more land. Seeking to stop these new invasions, Tecumseh approached war chiefs from a variety of tribes suggesting a vast alliance system in which the warriors would stop civil chiefs from selling land and form a military force to turn back the Americans.

Bent on continuing expansion, white leaders like Indiana territorial governor William Henry Harrison found Tecumseh's actions frightening. Finally, in November 1811, Harrison resorted to direct action, leading an army to invade Tecumseh's headquarters at Prophetstown on Tippecanoe Creek. Tecumseh was absent, seeking new allies, and Harrison's forces were able to overcome a spirited defense and burn the town, destroying its winter food supply. By the time Tecumseh reached



### TECUMSEH

Tecumseh followed in his father's footsteps by becoming an influential war leader among the Shawnee. And following the influence of his mother, a Creek who had married across tribal lines, he emphasized the unity between all Native American people. Both influences would lead him to undertake heroic efforts to preserve what remained of the Indians' territory in the years following the American Revolution. According to many experts, this particular portrait, a composite of several sketches, comes closest to capturing what this Indian leader looked like at the peak of his career.  
*Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812.*

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### *Troubling Currents in Jefferson's America*

- Emerging Factions in American Politics
- The Problem of American Neutrality
- Economic Warfare

#### *Crises in the Nation*

- Economic Depression
  - Political Upheaval
  - Prophecy and Politics in the West
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Tecumseh Denounces American Indian Policy, 1810
- Choosing War**
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** James Madison's War Message to Congress, 1812
- IT MATTERS TODAY:** The Battle of Tippecanoe

#### *The Nation at War*

- The Fighting Begins
- The War Continues
- The Politics of War
- New British Offensives
- The War's Strange Conclusion

#### *Peace and the Rise of New Expectations*

- Economic Change in the Post-War Republic
- A Revolution in the Southern Economy
- Reviving and Reinventing Slavery

#### *Summary*

**civil chiefs** In many Native American societies, leadership was shared among different classes of chiefs, each of which was responsible for specific political tasks; civil chiefs generally were responsible for overseeing domestic affairs, while war chiefs were responsible for diplomacy.

Tippecanoe in January, few of his followers remained. Thinking first of the survivors' welfare, Tecumseh traveled to Canada seeking emergency supplies.

While he was in Canada, war again broke out, this time between the United States and Great Britain. He decided that the only hope for the Shawnees' future lay in a British victory, and he committed what was left of his alliance to the British. But at the Battle of the Thames, on October 5, 1813, Tecumseh's forces were overrun, and Tecumseh was shot. Hopes for a unified Indian resistance died with Tecumseh, and his death foreshadowed a grim future for Indian land rights. Stinging from military defeats, the once-cosmopolitan world of the Indian interior became what whites imagined it to be: isolated tribes constantly warring among themselves. Expansionists like Harrison used this desperation to play one group off against another, carving piece after piece out of the Indian domain until, by 1850, virtually no Indians remained in the territory Tecumseh had tried to preserve.

Tecumseh's situation in Indiana reflected many of the more troubling problems that beset the nation during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Sitting at the juncture of three worlds—the dynamic republican world of Jeffersonian America, the European imperial world in Canada, and his own Native American world—Tecumseh perceived that unless something happened soon, all three worlds were heading for a crisis.

Jefferson had set an ambitious agenda for the country that was extremely popular with many Americans, but it created serious stresses within the nation and across the world. Along the Atlantic frontier, imperial powers such as Great Britain and France challenged Jefferson's commitment to open trade and freedom of the seas. A war of words, blustering threats, and some open confrontations pushed America increasingly toward crisis and triggered economic disaster. Along the western frontier, Indian groups opposed Jefferson's vision of rapid westward expansion. Here too, verbal and some armed conflicts engendered an air of crisis. And to many, including Harrison, these seemed not to be isolated phenomena. Convinced that a conspiracy was afoot between Indian dissidents like Tecumseh and imperial agents from Great Britain and France, an increasing number of Jeffersonians demanded aggressive action.

Try as they might to ease the growing tensions, neither Jefferson nor his successor, James Madison, could stem the tide of crisis. Harrison finally took matters over the edge: his attack on Prophetstown precipitated a general call for a war that set the nation on a new course altogether.

## Troubling Currents in Jefferson's America

- ★ **How did varying interests between regions of the country complicate Jefferson's political situation during his second term as president?**
- ★ **What impact did European politics have on the American economy between 1804 and 1808?**

Jefferson's successes, culminating in his victory in the 1804 election, seemed to prove that Republicans had absolute control over the nation's political reins. But factions challenging Jefferson's control were forming. A small but vocal coalition of disgruntled

# Chronology

<b>1794</b>	Eli Whitney patents cotton gin	<b>1812</b>	Battle of Tippecanoe and destruction of Prophetstown
<b>1803</b>	Britain steps up impressments		United States declares war against England
<b>1804</b>	Duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr Jefferson reelected Napoleon crowned emperor in France		United States invades Canada
<b>1805</b>	Beginning of Shawnee religious revival	<b>1813</b>	James Madison reelected
<b>1807</b>	Burr conspiracy trial Founding of Prophetstown <i>Chesapeake</i> affair		Fort Mims massacre
<b>1808</b>	Embargo of 1808 goes into effect Economic depression begins James Madison elected president		Battle of Put-in-Bay
<b>1809</b>	Non-Intercourse Act Fort Wayne Treaty Chouteau brothers form Missouri Fur Company	<b>1814</b>	Embargo of 1813
<b>1810</b>	Macon's Bill No. 2 Vincennes Conference between Harrison and Tecumseh Formation of War Hawk faction	<b>1814-15</b>	First mechanized textile factory, Waltham, Massachusetts
<b>1811</b>	United States breaks trade relations with Britain Second Vincennes Conference between Harrison and Tecumseh	<b>1815</b>	Battle of the Thames
			Battle of Horseshoe Bend
			British capture and burn Washington, D.C.
			Battle of Plattsburgh
			Treaty of Ghent
			Defeat of Napoleon
		<b>1819</b>	Congress of Vienna
		<b>1825</b>	Battle of New Orleans
			Treaty of Fort Jackson
			Portage des Sioux treaties
			Treaty of Edwardsville
			Prairie du Chien treaties

Federalists threatened to **secede** from the Union. Even within his own party, Jefferson's supremacy eroded, and dissidents emerged. Diplomatic problems also joined domestic ones to trouble Jefferson's second administration.

## Emerging Factions in American Politics

The Federalists' failure in the election of 1804 nearly spelled the troubled party's demise. With the West and the South firmly in Jefferson's camp, disgruntled New England Federalists found their once-dominant voice

being drowned out by those who shared Jefferson's agrarian vision for America's future. Proclaiming that "the people of the East cannot reconcile their habits, views, and interests with those of the South and West," Federalist leader Timothy Pickering advocated drastic changes in the Constitution to restore balance. Among other things, northerners demanded much stricter standards for admitting new states in the West and the elimination of the Three-Fifths Compromise. Pickering brought together a tight political coalition called the **Essex Junto** to press for these changes.

**secede** To withdraw formally from membership in a political union; threats of secession were used frequently during the early nineteenth century to bring attention to political issues.

**Essex Junto** A group of politicians who sought power outside of the regular political process—composed of radical Federalists in Essex County, Massachusetts, who at first advocated constitutional changes that would favor New England politically and later called for New England and New York to secede from the United States.

**John Randolph** Virginia

Republican politician who was a cousin of Thomas Jefferson; he believed in limited government and objected to several of Jefferson's policies.

**Tertium Quid** Republican faction formed by John Randolph in protest against Jefferson's plan for acquiring Florida from Spain; the name is Latin and means a "third thing," indicating Randolph's rejection of both the Federalist and Republican Parties.

Regional fissures began to open inside Jefferson's party as well. Throughout Jefferson's first administration, some within his party, especially those from the South, criticized the president for turning his back on republican principles by expanding federal power and interfering with states' rights. One of Jefferson's most vocal critics was his cousin, **John Randolph**.

The two Virginia Republicans clashed in 1806 when Jefferson irritated Randolph by approaching Congress for a \$2 million appropriation to be used to win French influence in convincing Spain to sell Florida to the United States. Citing these and other perceived violations of Republican principles, Randolph announced, "I found I might co-operate or be an honest man." Randolph chose honesty, splitting with Jefferson to form a third party, the **Tertium Quid**, fracturing the Republican united political front.

A second fissure in the party opened over controversial vice president Aaron Burr's political scheming. Upset that Burr had not conceded the presidency immediately after the tied Electoral College vote in 1800, Jefferson snubbed him throughout his first four years in office and then dropped him as his vice-presidential nominee in 1804. But Burr's political failures constituted an opportunity for the Essex Junto: Pickering offered to help Burr become governor of New York if Burr delivered the state to the northern confederacy. Burr agreed, but mainstream New York Federalists were furious, especially Alexander Hamilton. During the New York state election in the spring of 1804, Hamilton allegedly called Burr "a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government." Burr lost the election in a landslide, wrecking the junto's scheme and pushing himself into an even greater personal and political crisis. Never willing to accept defeat gracefully, Burr demanded that Hamilton retract his statements. When Hamilton refused, Burr challenged him to a duel. Although Hamilton was personally opposed to dueling, in the honor-driven culture that permeated early-nineteenth-century politics, he could not refuse. The vice president, an excellent shot, put a bullet directly through Hamilton's liver and into his spine, killing him.

Killing Hamilton did not solve Burr's problems. Although an indictment for murder was eventually dropped, Burr was forced into hiding and in the process fell in with a former Revolutionary War commander, James Wilkinson, who was employed simultaneously by Spain and the United States. Wilkinson's real loyalties and intentions remain mysterious, but one point seems clear: with Burr's help he intended to carve out a personal domain in the borderland between American and Spanish territories in the Mississippi region. When Congress reconvened in the fall of 1804 and Burr resumed his seat as president of the Senate, he used his political connections to gain an appointment for Wilkinson to be governor of the Louisiana Territory, providing an institutional foundation for whatever plot they had hatched. Then, when his vice-presidential term expired in 1805, Burr ventured west, sailing down the Mississippi to recruit associates. Rumors of intrigue soon surfaced, and investigations began when federal authorities received a letter from Wilkinson late in 1806 implicating Burr in a "deep, dark, wicked, and widespread conspiracy" against the United States. Learning that Wilkinson had turned him in, Burr tried to reach Spanish Florida but was captured early in 1807 and put on trial for treason.

Burr's trial provided an open arena for Jefferson and his critics to air their views on such touchy subjects as presidential power, westward expansion, and national loyalty. Presiding over the case, Chief Justice John Marshall made it clear that he believed Burr was a victim, not the perpetrator, of a conspiracy. Jefferson, however, was determined to have Burr prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Using the powers of his office, Jefferson offered pardons to conspirators who would testify against Burr, and he leaked

information that made his former vice president look guilty. He also refused to honor a subpoena issued by Marshall requiring Jefferson to appear in court and to produce official documents that might have a bearing on the case. In this instance, Jefferson embarrassed the chief justice by recalling that Marshall had supported George Washington's assertion of presidential privilege during investigations into Jay's Treaty. Marshall backed down, and neither Jefferson nor his executive papers appeared in court.

But Marshall struck back in his own way: he turned Jefferson's insistence upon strict constitutional constructionism against the president. In his instructions to the jury, Marshall noted that the Constitution defined treason as "levying war against the United States or adhering to their enemies" and that a guilty verdict required direct evidence from two witnesses. Because Burr had not waged war, and because neither Spain nor Britain was at the moment an enemy of the United States, the jury acquitted the former vice president, to the glee of Jefferson's critics.

### The Problem of American Neutrality

Internal tensions in American politics were matched by growing stress in the nation's diplomatic and economic relations. Jefferson's economic successes had been the product of continuing warfare in Europe. With their fleets engaged in naval battles, their people locked in combat, and their lands crisscrossed by opposing armies, Europeans needed American ships and the fruits of American labor, especially food. American neutrality ensured continued prosperity as long as the contending parties in Europe agreed to the diplomatic principle of neutrality.

Americans immediately grasped at this opportunity. An upsurge in European campaigning in 1803 helped raise the total value of American exports by over 65 percent. A significant proportion of the increase came from the shipment of foreign goods to foreign markets by way of neutral American ports: sugar from the Caribbean, for example, frequently passed through the United States on its way to Europe. These so-called re-exports rose in value from \$14 million in 1803 to \$60 million in 1807, prompting a rapid growth in earnings for American shipping. In 1790, net income from shipping amounted to a mere \$5.9 million; by 1807 the volume had surged to \$42.1 million.

This increased traffic on the high seas, however, placed American mariners in harms' way, given a British law that empowered the king's warships to engage in **impressment**. For decades, British sailors had protested the exceedingly cruel conditions and low pay in His Majesty's navy by jumping ship in American ports and enlisting as merchant sailors on American vessels. Strapped for mariners by renewed warfare, England pursued a vigorous policy of reclaiming British sailors after 1803, even if they were on neutral American ships and, more provocatively, even if they had become citizens of the United States. It is estimated that the British abducted as many as eight thousand sailors from American ships between 1803 and 1812. The loss of so many seamen hurt American shippers economically, but it wounded American pride even more. Like the XYZ affair, impressment seemed to be a direct denial of the United States' status as a legitimate nation.

### Economic Warfare

Pressure on American neutrality increased after 1805, when a military deadlock emerged in the European war: Britain was supreme at sea, whereas France was in control on the continent of Europe. Stuck in a stalemate, both sides used whatever nonmilitary advantages were available in an effort to tip the balance in their favor. Thus the war changed from one of military campaigning to one of diplomatic and economic maneuvering. Seeking to close off foreign supplies to England, in November 1806

**impressment** Procedure permitted under British maritime law that authorized commanders of warships to force English civilian sailors into military service.

The impressment of sailors into the British navy from American ships was one of the more prominent causes of the War of 1812. This 1790 engraving shows an American sailor being seized at gunpoint while those who might try to assist him are elbowed aside. Library of Congress.



**Berlin Decree** Napoleon's order declaring the British Isles under blockade and authorizing the confiscation of British goods from any ship found carrying them.

**frigate** A very fast warship, rigged with square sails and carrying from thirty to fifty cannons on two gun decks.

**broadside** The simultaneous discharge of all the guns on one side of a warship.

**Milan Decree** Napoleon's order authorizing the capture of any neutral vessels sailing from British ports or submitting to British searches.

Napoleon issued the **Berlin Decree**, barring ships that had anchored at British harbors from entering ports controlled by France. The British Parliament responded by issuing a series of directives that permitted neutral ships to sail to European ports only if they first called at a British port to pay a transit tax. It was thus impossible for a neutral ship to follow the laws of either nation without violating the laws of the other.

The British also stepped up enforcement of their European blockade and aggressively pursued impressment to strengthen the Royal Navy. The escalation in both France's and Britain's economic war efforts quickly led to confrontation with Americans and a diplomatic crisis. A pivotal event occurred in June 1807. The British *frigate Leopard*, patrolling the American shoreline, confronted the American warship *Chesapeake*. Even though both ships were inside American territorial waters, the *Leopard* ordered the American ship to halt and hand over any British sailors on board. When the *Chesapeake*'s captain refused, the *Leopard* fired several **broadsides**, crippling the American vessel, killing three sailors, and injuring eighteen. The British then boarded the *Chesapeake* and dragged off four men, three of whom were naturalized citizens of the United States. Americans were outraged.

Americans were not the only ones galvanized by British aggression. Shortly after the *Chesapeake* affair, word arrived in the United States that Napoleon had responded to Britain's belligerence by declaring a virtual economic war against neutrals. In the **Milan Decree**, he vowed to seize any neutral ship that so much as carried licenses to trade with England. What was worse, the Milan Decree stated that ships that had been boarded by British authorities—even against their crew's will—were subject to immediate French capture.

Many Americans viewed the escalating French and English sanctions as insulting treachery that cried out for an American response. The *Washington Federalist* newspaper observed, "We have never" witnessed such a "thirst for revenge." If Congress had been in session, the legislature surely would have called for war, but Jefferson stayed calm.

War with England or France or, worse still, with both would bring Jefferson's whole political program to a crashing halt. He had insisted on inexpensive government, lobbied for American neutrality, and hoped for renewed prosperity through continuing trade with Europe. War would destroy his entire agenda. But clearly Jefferson had to do something.

Believing that Europeans were far more dependent on American goods and ships than Americans were on European money and manufactures, Jefferson chose to violate one of his cardinal principles: the U.S. government would interfere in the economy to force Europeans to recognize American neutral rights. In December 1807, the president announced the **Embargo Act**, which prohibited American vessels from sailing to foreign ports unless the Europeans agreed to recognize America's neutral rights to trade with anyone it pleased.

**Embargo Act** Embargo (a government-ordered trade ban) signed by Jefferson in 1807 to pressure Britain and France to accept neutral trading rights.

## Crises in the Nation

- ★ **How did Jefferson's economic and Indian policies influence national developments after 1808?**
- ★ **What did the actions of frontier politicians such as William Henry Harrison do to bring the nation into war in 1812?**

Jefferson's reaction to European aggression immediately began strangling American trade and with it, America's domestic economic development. In addition, European countries still had legitimate claims on much of North America, and the Indians who continued to occupy most of the continent had enough military power to pose a serious threat to the United States if properly motivated. While impressment, blockade, and embargo paralyzed America's Atlantic frontier, a combination of European and Indian hostilities along the western frontier added to the air of national emergency. The resulting series of domestic crises played havoc with Jefferson's vision of a peaceful, prosperous nation.

### Economic Depression

Although Jefferson felt justified in suspending free trade to protect neutral rights, the result was the worst economic depression since the founding of the British colonies in North America. Critics observed that if Jefferson wished to keep

"the workshops in Europe," there had to be a way to import manufactured goods into the country. While Jefferson's "damn-bargo," as critics called it, was only halfheartedly enforced, the economy slumped disastrously. Taken together, all American exports fell from \$109 million to \$22 million, and net earnings from shipping plummeted by almost 50 percent. During 1808, earnings from business enterprise in America declined to less than a quarter of their value in 1807. The depression shattered economic and social life in many eastern towns.

New Englanders screamed loudest about the impact of the embargo, but southerners and westerners were just as seriously affected by it. The economy of the South had depended on the export of staple crops like tobacco since colonial times and was rapidly turning to cotton. There, embargo meant near-death to trade. In response to the loss of foreign markets, tobacco prices fell from \$6.75 per hundredweight to \$3.25, and cotton from 21 to 13 cents per pound. In the West, wholesale prices for agricultural products spiraled downward also. Overall, the prices of farm products were 16 percent lower between 1807 and 1811 than they had been between 1791 and 1801. At the same time, the price of

virtually every consumer item went up. The price of building materials—hardware, glass, and milled lumber—rose 11 percent during the same period, and the price of textiles climbed 20 percent. In fact, the only consumer item that did not go up in price was the one item farmers did not need to buy: food. Faced with dropping incomes and soaring costs, farmers probably felt the trade restrictions more profoundly than did others.

Rather than blaming their problems on the Republican administration, however, disaffected farmers directed their anger at the British. Frontiersmen believed, rightly or wrongly, that eliminating British interference with American trade would restore the boom economy that had drawn so many of them to the edge of American settlement. Thus westerners banded together to raise their voices in favor of American patriotism and war against Britain.

### Political Upheaval

Despite the escalating crisis in the country, Jefferson remained popular, but like Washington, he chose to step down from the presidency after serving two terms, making it clear to party officials that he favored Secretary of State James Madison to replace him in the upcoming presidential election of 1808. Although Madison and Jefferson had much in common and were longtime friends, they seemed very different from each other. Few could say they knew Madison well, but those who did found him captivating: a man of few words but of piercing intellect and unflinching conviction. Those less well acquainted with him thought the quiet Virginian indecisive: where Jefferson tended to act on impulse, Madison approached matters of state as he approached matters of political philosophy—with caution, patience, and reason.

Madison, chosen by the Republican **party caucus** over both the moderate James Monroe of Virginia and George Clinton of New York (the sitting vice president), easily defeated his Federalist opponent, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. But the one-sided results disguised deep political divisions in the nation at large. Federalist criticism of Jefferson's policies, especially of the embargo, was finding a growing audience as the depression deepened, and in the congressional election in 1808 the Republicans lost twenty-four seats to the Federalists.

During Madison's first two years in office, lack of any progress toward resolving the nation's woes seemed to confirm critics' perception of his indecisiveness. Despite that, Republicans actually made gains in the congressional elections in 1810: they regained fourteen of the seats they had lost in the House in 1808 and picked up two additional Senate seats. But this was no vote of confidence in Madison. Although the new congressmen were Republicans, sixty-three of them did not support Madison or his commitment to a conciliatory policy toward the British. These new members of Congress were mostly very young, extremely patriotic, and represented frontier constituents who were being ravaged by the agricultural depression. In the months to come, their increasingly strident demands for aggressive action against England earned them the nickname **War Hawks**.

### Prophecy and Politics in the West

**War Hawks** Members of Congress elected in 1810 from the West and South who campaigned for war with Britain in the hopes of stimulating the economy and annexing new territory.

A key reason for War Hawk militancy was the unsettled conditions along the western frontier. Relations with Indians in the West had been peaceful since the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. The Shawnees and other groups had been thrown off their traditional homelands in Ohio by the Treaty of Greenville and forced to move to new lands in Indiana. There, food shortages, disease, and continuing encroachment by settlers caused many young Indians to lose faith in their traditional beliefs and in themselves as human beings.

In the midst of the crisis, one disheartened, diseased alcoholic rose above his afflictions to lead the Indians into a brief new era of hope. Tecumseh's younger brother, Lalawethika, had bragged that he would play an influential role in his people's affairs (his name meant "Noisemaker"). But his prospects had declined along with those of his people. Lacking his brother's training as a warrior, Lalawethika felt increasingly hopeless, turned to alcohol, and finally in 1805 became critically ill. He claimed that he remembered dying and meeting the Master of Life, who showed him the way to lead his people out of degradation and commanded him to return to the world of the living so he could tell the Indians what they must do to recover their dignity. He then awoke, cured of his illness. Launching a full-fledged religious and cultural revival designed to teach the ways revealed to him by the Master of Life, he adopted the name Tenskwatawa ("the Way"). Whites called him "**The Prophet**."

Blaming the decline of his people on their adoption of white ways, the Prophet taught them to return to their traditional culture—to discard whites' clothing, religion, and especially alcohol—and live as their ancestors had lived. He also urged his followers to unify against the temptations and threats of white exploiters and to hold on to what remained of their lands. If they followed his teachings, the Prophet insisted, the Indians would regain control of their lives and their lands, and the whites would vanish from their world. In 1807 the Prophet established a model religious settlement, Prophetstown, on the banks of Tippecanoe Creek in Indiana Territory. Although he did not urge his followers to attack the whites, he made it clear that the Master of Life would defend him and his followers if war were pressed on them.

While Tenskwatawa continued to stress spiritual means for stopping white aggression, his brother Tecumseh pushed for a more political course of action. Tecumseh, seven years older than the Prophet, had always inclined more toward politics and warfare. Known as a brave fighter and a persuasive political orator, Tecumseh traveled throughout the western frontier, working out political and military alliances designed to put a stop to white expansion once and for all. Although he did not want to start a war against white settlers, Tecumseh exhorted Indians to defend every inch of land that remained to them. In 1807 he warned Ohio governor Thomas Kirker that they would do so with their lives.

Tecumseh's plan might have brought about his brother's goals. Faced by a unified defensive line of Indians stretching along the American frontier from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, the United States probably would have found it virtually impossible to expand any farther, and the Indian confederacy would have become a significant force in America's future. The very brilliance of Tecumseh's reasoning and his success at organizing Indian groups caused a great deal of confusion among whites. Various white officials were convinced that the Shawnee leader was a spy either for the French or for the British and that his activities were an extension of some hidden plot by one European power or another. Though wrong, such theories helped to escalate the air of crisis in the West and in the nation at large.

Indiana governor William Henry Harrison had good reason to advance the impression of a conspiracy between Tecumseh and the British. Harrison and men like him believed the United States had the right to control all of North America and, accordingly, to brush aside anything standing in the way by any means available. Britain and the Indians were thus linked in their thinking. Both were seen as obstacles to national destiny—and many War Hawks prayed for the outbreak of war between the United States and the British with the Indians in between. Such a war would provide an excuse for attacking the Indians along the frontier to break up their emerging confederation and dispossess them

#### **The Prophet (Tenskwatawa)**

Shawnee religious visionary who called for a return to Indian traditions and founded the community of Prophetstown on Tippecanoe Creek.

# Investigating America

## Tecumseh Denounces American Indian Policy, 1810

Between 1808 and 1811, Shawnee political spokesman Tecumseh and Indiana Territory governor William Henry Harrison engaged in a running war of words. In the course of these discussions, Tecumseh became increasingly frustrated at Harrison's apparent ignorance of political and social organization among the various groups of Indians in the American interior. He repeatedly explained that although relations among the various Indians were complex, they nevertheless constituted a single people and not a patchwork of separate nations. Finally, at a conference in Vincennes on August 20, 1810, Tecumseh lost his temper and accused Harrison of intentionally misunderstanding the nature of Native American intergroup relations as part of a larger effort to defraud the Indians of their land. The original handwritten transcript of this speech contains many abbreviations as well as some unusual spelling and punctuation. The excerpt that follows has been modernized for easier reading.

.....

You try to force the red people to do some injury. It is you that is pushing them on to do mischief. You endeavor to make distinctions. You wish to prevent the Indians to do as we wish them to: unite and let them consider their land as the common property of the whole. You take tribes aside and advise them not to come into this measure....

The reason I tell you this is [that] you want by your distinctions of Indian tribes in allotting to each a particular tract of land to make them to war with each other. You never see an Indian come and endeavor to make the white people do so. You are continually driving the red people when at last you will drive them into the great Lake where they can't either stand or work....



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**Old Northwest** The area of the United States referred to at the time as the Northwest Territory; it would eventually be broken into the states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

You ought to know what you are doing with the Indians. Perhaps it is by direction of the President to make those distinctions. It is a very bad thing and we do not like it. Since my residence at Tippecanoe, we have endeavored to level all distinctions to destroy village chiefs by whom all mischief is done; it is they who sell our land to the Americans [so] our object is to let all our affairs be transacted by Warriors. This land that was sold and the goods that were given for it was only done by a few.... But in future we are prepared to punish those chiefs who may come forward to propose to sell their land. If you continue to purchase [land from] them, it will produce war among the different tribes, and at last I do not know what will be the consequences to the white people....

I now wish you to listen to me. If you do not it will appear as if you wished me to kill all the chiefs that sold you the land. I tell you so because I am authorized by all the tribes to do so. I am at the head of them all. I am a Warrior and all the Warriors will meet together in two or three moons from this. Then I will call for those chiefs that sold you the land and shall know what to do with them. If you do not restore the land, you will have a hand in killing them.

.....

- What exactly is Tecumseh charging Harrison and his agents of doing? What does this suggest about Tecumseh's understanding of the nature of Indian organization and Harrison's misunderstandings about it?
- Why would Tecumseh insist that warriors rather than village chiefs decide policy toward the United States?
- What did Tecumseh propose to do if Harrison persisted in conducting Indian policy and land acquisition as he had done at Fort Wayne? Why do you think Tecumseh chose this particular approach?

of their land. In addition, a war would justify invading and seizing Canada, which would open rich timber, fur, and agricultural lands for American settlement. More important, it would secure American control of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River—potentially a very valuable shipping route for agricultural produce from upper New York, northern Ohio, and the newly opening areas of the **Old Northwest**.

## Choosing War

With the nation reeling from the economic squeeze of the embargo, Congress replaced it with the **Non-Intercourse Act** early in 1809. The new law forbade trade only with England and France and gave the president the power to reopen trade if either of the combatants lifted its restrictions against American shipping. Even though this act was much less restrictive than the embargo, American merchants were relieved when it expired in the spring of 1810. At that point, Congress passed an even more permissive boycott, **Macon's Bill No. 2**. According to this new law, merchants could trade with the combatants if they wanted to take the risk, but if either France or England lifted its blockade, the United States would stop trading with the other.

Hoping to cut England off from needed outside supplies, Napoleon responded to Macon's Bill in August by sending a letter to the American government promising to suspend French restrictions on American shipping. In secret, however, the French emperor issued an order to continue seizing American ships. Despite Napoleon's devious intentions, a desperate Madison instructed the American mission in London to tell the British that he would close down trade with them unless they joined France in dropping trade restrictions. Sure that Napoleon was lying, the British refused, backing the president into a diplomatic corner. In February 1811, the provisions of Macon's Bill forced Madison to close trading with Britain for its failure to remove economic sanctions, stepping up tensions all around.

Later in the year, events in the West finally triggered a crisis. The underlying origin of the problem was an agreement, the Fort Wayne Treaty, signed in the fall of 1809 between the United States and representatives of the Miami, Potawatomi, and Delaware Indians. In return for an outright bribe of \$5,200 and individual **annuities** ranging from \$250 to \$500, civil chiefs among these three tribes sold over 3 million acres of Indian land in Indiana and Illinois—land already occupied by many other Indian groups.

In August 1810, Tecumseh met with Governor Harrison in Vincennes, Indiana, to denounce the Fort Wayne Treaty. Harrison insisted that the agreement was legitimate. Speaking for those whose lands had been sold out from under them, Tecumseh said, "They want to save that piece of land, we do not wish you to take it . . . I want the present boundary line to continue. Should you cross it, I assure you it will be productive of bad consequences." But Harrison refused to budge.

The Vincennes meeting convinced the Indians that they must prepare for an attack. The Prophet increasingly preached the Master of Life's commitment to support the faithful in a battle against the whites. Tecumseh traveled up and down the American frontier, enlisting additional allies into his growing Indian confederacy. Meanwhile, Harrison grew more and more eager to attack the Indians before they could unite fully. He got his chance when a second peace conference, also held at Vincennes in the summer of 1811, also failed. Citing the failed peace effort and sporadic skirmishes between frontier settlers and renegade bands of Indians, none of whom were directly connected to Tecumseh, Harrison ordered an attack. On November 7, in the so-called **Battle of Tippecanoe**, an army of enraged frontiersmen burned Prophetstown. Then, having succeeded in setting the Indian frontier ablaze, Harrison called for a declaration of war against the Indians and the British.

Coming as it did while Congress was already embroiled in debate over economic sanctions and British impressment, the outbreak of violence on the frontier was finally enough to push Madison into action. The president was still hoping for some sort of peaceful resolution, and chose his words carefully when he informed Congress, "We behold . . . on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States; and on the side of the United States, a state of peace toward Britain." As chairman of the House

**Non-Intercourse Act** Law passed by Congress in 1809 reopening trade with all nations except France and Britain and authorizing the president to reopen trade with both countries if they lifted restrictions on American shipping.

**Macon's Bill No. 2** Law passed by Congress in 1810 that offered exclusive trading rights to France or Britain, whichever recognized American neutral rights first.

**annuity** An allowance or income paid annually.

**Battle of Tippecanoe** Battle near Prophetstown in 1811, where American forces led by William Henry Harrison defeated the followers of the Shawnee Prophet and destroyed the town.

# Investigating America

## James Madison's War Message to Congress, 1812

As one of the chief architects of the Constitution, President Madison was well aware that the power to "declare war" rested with Congress. (In the *Federalist Papers*, Hamilton had argued that the president's role as "commander in chief of the army and navy" existed only after Congress declared war.) Accordingly, on June 1, 1812, Madison sent a message to Congress (rather than appear in person) on the state of relations between the United States and Britain. In the following excerpt, he did not call for a declaration of war, but listed four major grievances that might justify action: impressment, illegal blockades, the seizure of American ships and cargoes, and British responsibility for renewing Indian warfare in the northwest. It would then be up to Congress to act.

.....

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States: I communicate to Congress certain documents, being a continuation of those heretofore laid before them on the subject of our affairs with Great Britain....

British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it, not in the exercise of a belligerent right founded on the law of nations against an enemy, but of a municipal prerogative over British subjects. British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations and the laws of the country to which the vessels belong, and a self-redress is assumed which, if British subjects were wrongfully detained and alone concerned, is that substitution of force for a resort to the responsible sovereign which falls within the definition of war. Could the seizure of British subjects in such cases be regarded as within the exercise of a belligerent right, the acknowledged laws of war, which forbid an article of captured property to be adjudged without a regular investigation before a competent tribunal, would imperiously demand the fairest trial where the sacred rights of persons were at issue. In place of such a trial these rights are subjected to the will of every petty commander....

Under pretended blockades, without the presence of an adequate force and sometimes without the practicability of

applying one, our commerce has been plundered in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets, and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests. In aggravation of these predatory measures they have been considered as in force from the dates of their notification, a retrospective effect being thus added, as has been done in other important cases, to the unlawfulness of the course pursued. And to render the outrage the more signal these mock blockades have been reiterated and enforced in the face of official communications from the British Government declaring as the true definition of a legal blockade "that particular ports must be actually invested and previous warning given to vessels bound to them not to enter."

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers, a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons without connecting their hostility with that influence and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that Government....

.....

- Why did Madison choose to list the grievances in the order he did?
- Given his claim that Britain's blockades had damaged American commerce, why did the most commercial sections of the nation oppose war?
- What does Madison's language regarding Native Americans suggest as to the government's goals on the frontier?
- Even as he urged the Congress to declare war, the president doubted the young republic's ability to defeat the mightiest navy on the globe. Was the *willingness* of the Republican Party to fight for American rights, even at the cost of invasion and defeat, principled or foolish? Or both?



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# It Matters Today

## THE BATTLE OF TIPPECANOE

Americans today generally think that Indians never really mattered in the nation's history. This modern dismissal of Indian significance is entirely incorrect. For years before the Battle of Tippecanoe, William Henry Harrison warned officials in Washington that if Tecumseh was successful, he really could stop American westward expansion. This was not baseless exaggeration. As Harrison himself said of Tecumseh, "He is one of those uncommon geniuses, which spring up occasionally to produce revolutions and overturn the established order of things." Historians disagree about whether Tecumseh could have succeeded in stopping American expansion, but there is no question that the unified force he was raising along the American frontier would have compelled politicians like Jefferson to reconsider their policies. In either case, America today would

be a profoundly different place had Harrison not destroyed Prophetstown and undermined the growing Indian confederacy.

- How might the Jefferson administration have dealt differently with the demands made by Tecumseh and his allies? In what ways would the United States be different today had this alternative course been followed?
- Since the early nineteenth century, the United States has encountered resistance to national expansion on a number of fronts. Choose another situation from later in the nation's history in which such resistance was dealt with. What similarities and/or differences do you see between this event and the handling of Tecumseh's resistance movement?

Foreign Relations Committee, however, **John C. Calhoun** was less circumspect: "The mad ambition, the lust of power, and the commercial avarice of Great Britain have left to neutral nations an alternative only between the base surrender of their rights, and a manly vindication of them." He then introduced a war bill in Congress.

When the vote was finally cast in 1812, the war bill passed by a vote of 79 to 49 in the House and 19 to 13 in the Senate. Although they had the most to lose from continued indecisive policies, representatives from the heavily Federalist regions that depended the most on overseas trade—Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York—voted against war, whereas strongly Republican western and southern representatives voted in favor.

**John C. Calhoun** Congressman from South Carolina who was a leader of the War Hawks and the author of the official declaration of war in 1812.

## The Nation at War

- ★ **What geographic and economic factors impeded American war efforts against Great Britain and Britain's Indian allies?**
- ★ **How did events in Europe influence the war in America?**

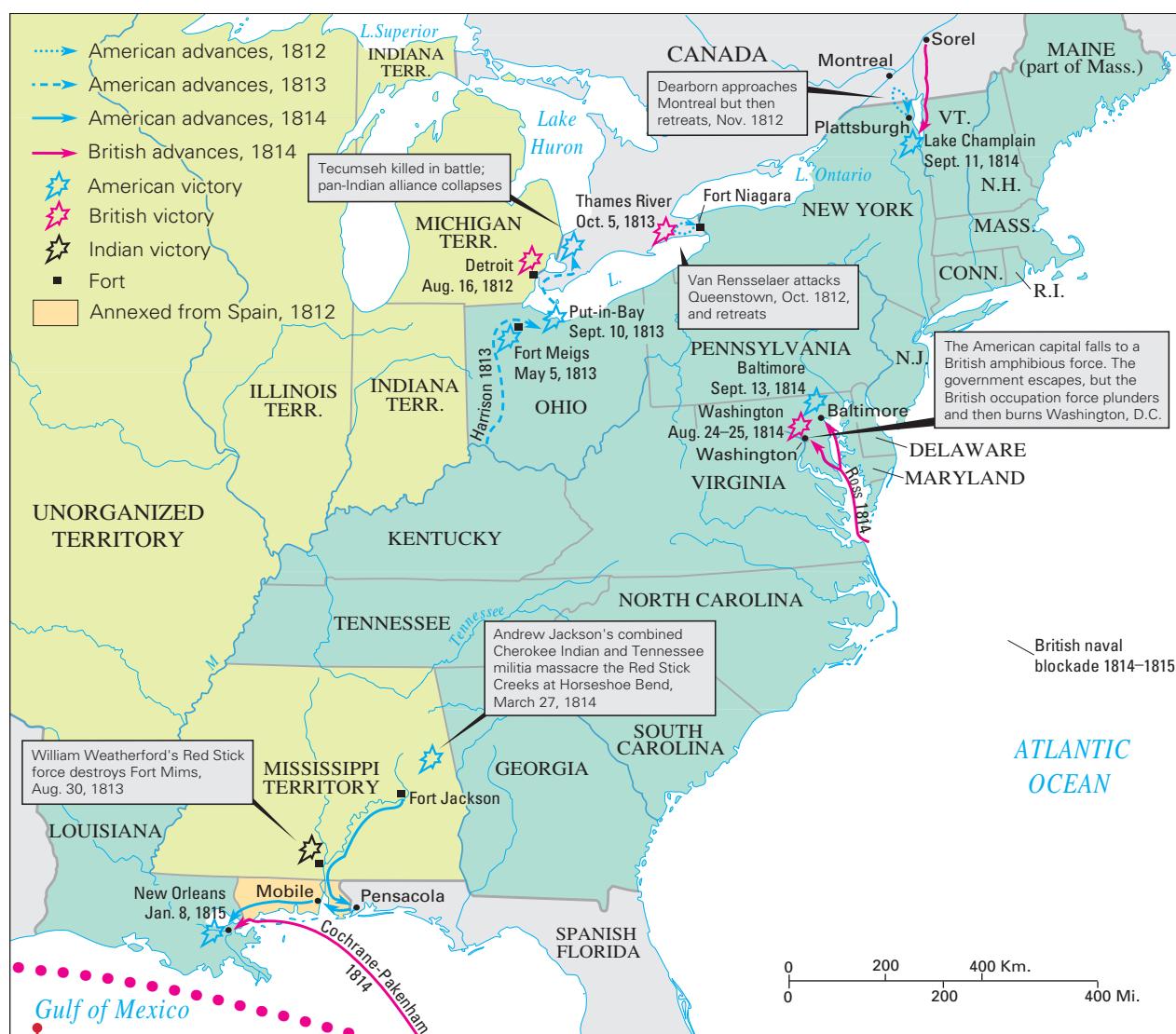
The nation was dreadfully unprepared when the breach with England finally came. With virtually no army or navy, the United States was taking a terrible risk in engaging what was fast becoming the most awesome military power in the world. Not surprisingly, defeat and humiliation were the main fruits of American efforts as the two nations faced off.

### The Fighting Begins

Despite years of agitation, the war's arrival in 1812 caught the United States terribly unprepared. Republican cost cutting had virtually disbanded the military during Jefferson's first term in office. The navy had fewer than twenty vessels,

and the army could field fewer than seven thousand men. And for all its war fever, a coalition of Federalists and Quids in Congress balked at appropriating new funds even after war had been declared. Thus the first ventures in the war went forward with only grudging financial support.

In line with what the War Hawks wanted, the first military campaign was a three-pronged drive toward Canada and against the Indians (see Map 9.1). One force, commanded by Harrison, was successful in raiding undefended Indian villages but was unable to make any gains against British troops. Farther east, a force led by Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer was defeated by a small British and Indian army. Meanwhile, the third force, commanded by Henry Dearborn, lunged at Montreal but nervously withdrew back into U.S. territory after an inconclusive battle against the British.



**MAP 9.1** The War of 1812

The heaviest action during the first two years of the War of 1812 lay along the U.S./Canadian border. In 1814 the British sought to knock the United States out of the war by staging three offensives: one along the northern frontier at Plattsburgh, New York; one into the Chesapeake; and a third directed at the Mississippi River at New Orleans. All three offensives failed.

American sailors fared much better during the war's opening days. Leading the war effort at sea were three frigates: the *Constitution* (popularly known as **Old Ironsides**), the *President*, and the *United States*. In mid-August, the *Constitution* outmaneuvered and eventually sank what the British described as "one of our stoutest frigates," the H.M.S. *Guerrière*. The *United States*, under the command of Stephen Decatur, enjoyed a victory against the British frigate the H.M.S. *Macedonian*. Enduring thirty broadsides fired by the *Macedonian*, Decatur's gunners splintered the British ship with seventy broadsides of their own. Though no stranger to the horrors of war, Decatur was shocked by what he found when he boarded the crippled vessel: "fragments of the dead scattered in every direction, the decks slippery with blood, and one continuous agonizing yell of the unhappy wounded." American privateers also enjoyed success, capturing 450 British merchant ships valued in the millions during the first six months of the war.

Despite these early naval victories, when Madison stood for reelection in 1812, the nation's military fate appeared uncertain and his leadership seemed shaky. Although the majority of his party's congressional caucus supported him for reelection, nearly a third of the Republican congressmen—mostly those from New York and New England—rallied around New Yorker DeWitt Clinton, nephew and political ally of Madison's former challenger George Clinton. Like his uncle, DeWitt Clinton was a Republican who favored Federalist economic policies and agreed with New England Federalists that the war was unnecessary. Most Federalists supported Clinton, and the party did not field a candidate of its own.

When the campaign was over, the outcome was nearly the same as the congressional vote on the war bill earlier in the year. New York and New England rallied behind Clinton. The South and West continued to support Madison, the Republicans, and war. Madison won but was in no position to gloat. His share of electoral votes in the dangerously sectional contest had fallen from 72 percent in 1808 to 58.9 percent. At the same time, Republican Party strength in the House dropped by over 13 percent, and in the Senate by about 8 percent.

### The War Continues

When military campaigning resumed in the spring of 1813, it appeared that the U.S. Army would fare as badly as it had the previous fall. Fighting resumed when British colonel Henry Proctor and Tecumseh, with a joint force of nine hundred British soldiers and twelve hundred Indians, laid siege to Harrison's command camped at Fort Meigs on the Maumee Rapids in Ohio. An army of twelve hundred Kentucky militiamen finally arrived and drove the enemy off, but they were so disorganized that they lost nearly half their number in pursuing the British and Indian force. Having escaped virtually unscathed, Proctor and Tecumseh continued to harass American forces through the summer. Then, with winter approaching, the British and Indians withdrew to Canada. Harrison, who had been busy raising additional troops, decided to pursue.

No doubt Harrison's new effort would have proved as fruitless as his earlier ones, but an unexpected event turned the odds in his favor. One key problem plaguing Harrison and other commanders in the field was that the British controlled the Great Lakes and thus could depend on an uninterrupted supply line. In contrast, American forces and their supplies moved along undeveloped roads and were easy targets for Indian and British attackers. **Oliver Hazard Perry**, a young naval tactician, had been given command of a small fleet assigned to clear the lakes of British ships. After months of playing hide-and-seek among the shore islands, British and American ships met in battle at Put-in-Bay in September 1813. Two hours of cannon fire left Perry's **flagship**, the *Lawrence*, nearly destroyed, and 80 percent of the crew lay dead or wounded. Perry refused to surrender. He slipped off his damaged vessel and took command of another ship standing nearby.

**Old Ironsides** Nickname of the U.S.S. *Constitution*, the forty-four-gun American frigate whose victory over the *Guerrière* bolstered sagging national morale during the War of 1812.

**Oliver Hazard Perry** American naval officer who led the fleet that defeated the British in the Battle of Put-in-Bay during the War of 1812.

**flagship** The ship that carries the fleet commander and bears the commander's flag.

What remained of his command then sailed back into the heart of the British force and, after three hours of close combat, subdued and captured six British ships. Perry immediately sent a note to Harrison stating, “We have met the enemy and they are ours.”

Buoyed by this news, Harrison’s army closed in on Proctor and Tecumseh at the Thames River, about 50 miles northeast of Detroit, on October 5. The British force faced a piercing cavalry charge and, lacking naval support, was soon forced to surrender. The Indians held out longer, but when word spread that Tecumseh had been killed, they melted into the woods, leaving the body of their fallen leader to be torn apart by the victorious Americans.

Another war front had also opened farther south during 1813. Although the Creek Confederacy as a whole wished to remain neutral, one faction calling itself the Red Sticks had allied with Tecumseh in 1812. In the summer of 1813, Red Stick leader William Weatherford led a force against Fort Mims, killing all but about thirty of the more than three hundred occupants. The so-called Fort Mims massacre enraged whites in the Southeast. In Tennessee, twenty-five hundred militiamen rallied around **Andrew Jackson**, a young planter and Indian fighter. Already called “Old Hickory” because of his toughness, Jackson and his frontier ruffians fought multiple engagements against the Red Stick Creeks, driving them into hiding.

**Andrew Jackson** General who defeated the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend in 1814 and the British at New Orleans in 1815; he later became the seventh president of the United States.

**vicissitudes** Sudden or unexpected changes encountered during the course of life.

### The Politics of War

The war had wound down for the winter by the time Congress reconvened in December 1813, but the outlook was not good. Disappointed that American forces had not knocked the British out of the war, Republican representative William Murfree spoke for many when he said, “The result of the last campaign disappointed the expectations of every one.” President Madison tried to be optimistic. Recalling the victories during the year, he said, “The war, with its **vicissitudes**, is illustrating the capacity and destiny of the United States to be a great, a flourishing, and a powerful nation.”

Madison’s optimism seemed justified later in December when the British offered to open direct peace negotiations with the Americans. The president quickly formed a peace commission, but until its work was done, Madison and Congress still had to worry about the practical issues of troops and money, both of which were in critically short supply.

Despite increases in army pay and bonuses for new recruits, enlistments were falling off in 1813. Congressional Republicans responded by adding further enticements for new recruits, including grants of 160 acres of land in the western territories. Congress also authorized the president to extend the term of enlistment for men already in service. By 1814, Congress had increased the size of the army to more than sixty-two thousand men, but congressional Republicans, as traditional enemies of internal taxes, decided to borrow to pay for the buildup, authorizing a \$35 million deficit.

Adding to the money problem was the fact that, to this point in the war, the United States had permitted neutral nations to trade freely in American ports, carrying American exports to England and Canada and English goods into eastern ports. As a result, the president proposed an absolute embargo on all American ships and goods—neither were to leave port—and a complete ban on imports that were customarily produced in Great Britain. Federalists, especially those from New England, called the proposal “an engine of tyranny, an engine of oppression,” no different, they said, from the Intolerable Acts imposed on American colonies by Britain in 1774. But congressional Republicans passed the embargo a mere eight days after Madison submitted it.

The **Embargo of 1813** was the most far-reaching trade restriction bill ever passed by Congress. It confined all trading ships to port, and even fishing vessels could put to sea

**Embargo of 1813** An absolute embargo on all American trade and British imports.

only if their masters posted sizable **bonds**. Government officials charged with enforcing the new law had unprecedented **discretionary powers**. The impact was devastating: The embargo virtually shut down the New England and New York economies, and it severely crippled the economy of nearly every other state.

### New British Offensives

While Congress debated matters of finance and trade restrictions, events in Europe were changing the entire character of the war. On March 31, 1814, the British and their allies took Paris, forcing Napoleon to abdicate his throne. Few in America mourned the French emperor's fall. Napoleon's defeat, however, left the United States as Great Britain's sole military target. Republican Joseph Nicholson expressed a common lament when he observed, "We should have to fight hereafter not for 'free Trade and sailors rights,' not for the Conquest of the Canadas, but for our national Existence."

As Nicholson feared, a flood of combat-hardened British veterans began arriving in North America, and the survival of the United States as an independent nation was indeed at issue. By the late summer of 1814, British troop strength in Canada had risen to thirty thousand men. From this position of power, the British prepared a series of offensives to bring the war to a quick end.

In August 1814, twenty British warships and several troop transports sailed up Chesapeake Bay toward Washington, D.C. The British arrived outside Washington at midday on August 24. The troops defending the city could not withstand the force of hardened British veterans, but they delayed the invasion long enough for the government to escape.

**bond** A sum of money paid as bail or security.

**discretionary powers** In government, powers given to an administrative official to be used without outside consultation or oversight.



Although the British were successful in capturing the U.S. capital in August 1814, defenders stalled the invasion long enough for the government to escape. In frustration, the British pillaged the city and then burned the public buildings. This painting captures the disordered scene as city dwellers try to quench the flames while the capitol building blazes in the background. © Bettmann/CORBIS.

Angered at being foiled, the British sacked the city, torching most of the buildings. They then moved on toward the key port city of Baltimore.

At Baltimore, the British navy had to knock out Fort McHenry and take the harbor before the army could take the city. On September 13, British ships armed with heavy mortars and rockets attacked the fort. Despite the pounding, when the sun rose on September 14, the American flag continued to wave over Fort McHenry. The sight moved a young Georgetown volunteer named **Francis Scott Key**, who had watched the shelling as a prisoner aboard one of the British ships, to record the event in a poem that was later set to music and became the national anthem of the United States. Having failed to reduce the fort, the British were forced to withdraw, leaving Baltimore undisturbed.

On yet another front, the British pressed an offensive against the Gulf Coast designed to take pressure off Canada and close transportation on the Mississippi River. The defense of the Gulf Coast fell to Andrew Jackson and his Tennesseans. Having spent the winter raising troops and collecting supplies, in March 1814 Jackson and his army of four thousand militiamen and Cherokee volunteers resumed their mission to punish the Red Stick Creeks. Learning that the Red Sticks had established a camp on the peninsula formed by a bend in the Tallapoosa River, Jackson led his men on a forced march to attack. On March 27, in what was misleadingly called the **Battle of Horseshoe Bend**, Jackson's force trapped the Creeks and slaughtered nearly eight hundred people, destroying Red Stick opposition and severely crippling Indian resistance in the South.

After the massacre at Horseshoe Bend, Jackson moved his army toward the Gulf of Mexico, where a British offensive was in the making. Arriving in New Orleans on December 1, he found the city ill prepared to defend itself. The local militia, consisting mostly of French and Spanish residents, would not obey American officers. “Those who are not for us are against us, and will be dealt with accordingly,” Jackson proclaimed. He turned increasingly to unconventional sources of support. Free blacks in the city formed a regular army corps, and Jackson created a special unit of black refugees from Saint Domingue under the command of Colonel Jean Baptiste Savary. White citizens protested Jackson’s arming of runaway slaves, but he ignored their objections. “Legitimate citizens” protested too when Jackson accepted a company of river pirates under the command of **Jean Lafitte**, awarding them a blanket pardon for all past crimes. “Hellish Banditti,” Jackson himself called them, but the pirate commander and the general hit it off so well that Lafitte became Jackson’s constant companion during the campaign.

Having pulled his ragtag force together, Jackson settled in to wait for the British attack. On the morning of January 8, 1815, it came. The British force, commanded by General Edward Pakenham, emerged from the fog at dawn, directly in front of Jackson’s defenses. Waiting patiently behind a dry canal, Jackson’s men began firing cannon, rifles, and muskets as the British moved within range. According to one British veteran, it was “the most murderous fire I have ever beheld before or since.”

When it was all over, more than two thousand British troops had been killed or wounded in the **Battle of New Orleans**, whereas a mere seventy-one Americans fell. This was by far the most successful battle fought by American forces during the War of 1812. Although it was fought after the preliminary peace treaty was signed, the agreement had yet to be ratified by Parliament, and so Jackson’s victory saved the peace.

### The War’s Strange Conclusion

While the British were closing in on Washington in the summer of 1814, treaty negotiations designed to end the war were beginning in Ghent, Belgium. Confident that their campaigns would soon knock the Americans out of the war, the

**mortar** A portable, muzzle-loading cannon that fires large projectiles at high trajectories over a short range; traditionally used by mobile troops against fixed fortifications.

**Francis Scott Key** Author of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which chronicles the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in 1814; Key’s poem, set to music, became the official U.S. national anthem in 1931.

**Battle of Horseshoe Bend** Battle in 1814 in which Tennessee militia massacred Creek Indians in Alabama, ending Red Stick resistance to white westward expansion.

**Jean Lafitte** Leader of a band of pirates in southeast Louisiana; he offered to fight for the Americans at New Orleans in return for the pardon of his men.

**Battle of New Orleans** Battle in the War of 1812 in which American troops commanded by Andrew Jackson destroyed the British force attempting to seize New Orleans.

British delegates were in no hurry to end it by diplomacy. They refused to discuss substantive issues, insisting that all of the matters raised by Madison's peace commission were nonnegotiable.

At that point, however, domestic politics in Britain began to play a deciding role. After nearly a generation of armed conflict, the English people were war-weary, especially the taxpayers. As one British official put it, "Economy & relief from taxation are not merely the War Cry of Opposition, but they are the real objects to which public attention is turned." The failure at Baltimore made it appear that, at best, the war would drag on at least another year, at an estimated cost to Britain of an additional \$44 million. Moreover, continuation of the American war was interfering with Britain's European diplomacy. Trying to arrive at a peace settlement for Europe at the **Congress of Vienna**, a British official commented, "We do not think the Continental Powers will continue in good humour with our Blockade of the whole Coast of America." Speaking for the military, the **Duke of Wellington** reviewed British military successes and failures in the American war and advised his countrymen, "You have no right . . . to demand any **concession** . . . from America."

In the end, the **Treaty of Ghent**, completed on December 24, 1814, simply restored diplomatic relations between England and the United States to what they had been prior to the outbreak of war. The treaty said nothing about impressment, blockades, or neutral trading rights. Neither military action nor diplomatic finagling netted Canada for the War Hawks. And the treaty did nothing about the alleged conspiracies between Indians and British agents. Although Americans called the War of 1812 a victory, they actually won none of the prizes that Madison's war statement had declared the nation was fighting for.

## Peace and the Rise of New Expectations

- ★ **How did events during the War of 1812 help to move the American economy in new directions after peace was restored?**
- ★ **What impact did changes in the economy have on the institution of slavery and on the lives of slaves?**

Despite repeated military disasters, loss of life, and diplomatic failure, the war had a number of positive effects on the United States. Just to have survived a war against the British was enough to build national confidence, but to have scored major victories such as those at Plattsburgh, Baltimore, and especially New Orleans was truly worth boasting about. Americans emerged from the conflict with a new sense of national pride and purpose. And many side effects from the fighting itself gave Americans new hopes and plans.

### Economic Change in the Post-War Republic

Although trading interests in the Northeast suffered following Jefferson's embargo and were nearly ruined by the war and Madison's embargo, a new avenue of economic expansion opened in New England. Cut off from European manufactured goods, Americans started to make more textiles and other items for themselves.

Samuel Slater, an English immigrant who had been trained in manufacturing in Britain, introduced the use of machines for spinning cotton yarn to the United States in 1790. His mill was financially successful, but few others tried to copy his enterprise. Even with shipping expenses, tariffs, and other added costs, buying machine-made British cloth was still more practical than investing large sums at high risk to build competing

**Congress of Vienna** Conference among ambassadors from the major powers in Europe to redraw the continent's political map after the defeat of Napoleon; it also sought to uproot revolutionary movements and restore traditional monarchies.

**Duke of Wellington** The most respected military leader in Great Britain at this time; Wellington was responsible for the defeat of Napoleon.

**concession** In diplomacy, something given up during negotiations.

**Treaty of Ghent** Treaty ending the War of 1812, signed in Belgium in 1814; it restored peace but was silent on the issues over which the United States and Britain had gone to war.

factories in the United States. And after 1800, Jefferson's economic policies discouraged such investment. But his embargo changed all that. After it went into effect in 1808, British fabrics became increasingly unavailable, and prices soared. Slater and his partners moved quickly to expand their spinning operations to fill the void. And now his inventiveness was widely copied.

Another entrepreneur, Francis Cabot Lowell, went even further than Slater. Left in the lurch economically by the embargo, Lowell ventured to England in 1810. While there, he engaged in wholesale industrial espionage, observing British textile-manufacturing practices and machinery and making detailed notes and sketches of what he saw. Returning to the United States just before war broke out in 1812, Lowell formed the Boston Manufacturing Company. In 1813 the company used the plans Lowell had smuggled back to the United States to build a factory in Waltham, Massachusetts. The new facility included spinning machines, power looms, and all the equipment necessary to **mechanize** every stage in the production of finished cloth, bringing the entire process under one roof. Like Slater's innovations, Lowell's too were soon duplicated by economically desperate New Englanders.

The spread of textile manufacturing was astonishing. Prior to 1808, only fifteen cotton mills of the sort Slater had introduced had been built in the entire country. But between the passage of the embargo and the end of 1809, eighty-seven additional mills had sprung up, mostly in New England. And when war came, the pace increased, especially when Lowell's idea of a mechanized textile factory proved to be highly efficient and profitable. The number of people employed in manufacturing increased from four thousand in 1809 to perhaps as many as a hundred thousand in 1816. In the years to come, factories in New England and elsewhere supplied more and more of the country's consumer goods.

Nor was business growth confined to the Northeast. Following the war, pioneers poured into the West in astounding numbers. The population of Ohio had already soared from 45,000 in 1800 to 231,000 in 1810, but it more than doubled again by 1820, reaching 581,000. Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Michigan experienced similar growth. Most of those who flooded into the newly opened West were small farmers, but subsistence agriculture was not the only economic opportunity that drew expectant Americans into the region. Big business, too, had great expectations for finding new wealth in the West. Entrepreneurs like German-born John Jacob Astor and Frenchman Auguste Chouteau made their initial fortunes in the fur trade that expanded enormously following the war, but they soon found themselves invested in banking, mining, and transportation development in the rapidly growing West. When Astor died in 1848, he was the wealthiest man in America, the result of his aggressive pursuit of Far Western business ventures.

But American westward expansion posed a terrible threat to Native Americans. When Harrison's soldiers burned Prophetstown and later killed Tecumseh, they wiped out all hopes for a pan-Indian confederacy. In addition, the civil war among the Creeks, followed by Jackson's victories against the Red Stick faction, removed all meaningful resistance to westward expansion in the South. Many Indian groups continued to wield great power, but accommodationist leaders such as those who formed the Cherokee government suggested that cooperation with federal authorities was the best course.

Collaboration between the United States and Native Americans helped to prevent renewed warfare, but at enormous cost to the Indians. Within a year of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Jackson forced the Creeks to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which confiscated over 20 million acres of land from the Creek Confederacy. A similar but more gradual assault on Indian landholding began in the Northwest in 1815. In a council meeting at Portage des Sioux in Illinois Territory, the United States signed peace accords

**mechanize** To substitute machinery for human labor.

with the various tribes that had joined the British during the war. Both sides pledged that their earlier hostilities would be “forgiven and forgotten” and that all the agreeing parties would live in “perpetual peace and friendship.” The northwestern Indians, however, possessed some 2 million acres of prime real estate between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers—land that the U.S. government had already given away as enlistment bonuses to white war volunteers. Moving the Indians off that land as quickly as possible thus became a matter of national priority, and over the next several years, **federal Indian agents** used bribery, threat, and manipulation of local tensions to pursue their goal, eventually winning an enormous cession of land through the Treaty of Edwardsville (1819) and the Prairie du Chien treaties (1825).

### A Revolution in the Southern Economy

Indian dispossession and westward expansion also promised great economic growth for the South. In the years before the War of 1812, the southern economy had been sluggish, and the future of the region’s single-crop agricultural system was doubtful. Tobacco, the mainstay of the South’s economy, was no longer the glorious profit maker it had been during the colonial period. Sea Island cotton, rice, sugar, and other products continued to find markets, but they grew only in limited areas. However, the technological and economic changes that came in the war’s wake pumped new energy into the South. In only a few decades, an entirely new South emerged.

The mechanization of the British textile industry in the late eighteenth century created an enormous new demand for cotton. Southern planters had been growing the fibrous plant since colonial times, but soil and climatic conditions limited the growing area for the sort of **long-staple cotton** that could be harvested and sold economically. Large areas of the South and Southwest had proved suitable for growing **short-staple cotton**, but the time and labor required to pick the sticky seeds from the compact **cotton bolls** made the crop unprofitable. In 1793, a young Yale College graduate, **Eli Whitney**, was a guest at a plantation in Georgia, where he learned about the difficulty of removing the seeds from short-staple cotton. In a matter of weeks, Whitney helped to perfect a machine that allowed a small and unskilled work force to quickly comb out the seeds without damaging the fibers. Whitney’s cotton gin, though revolutionary in its impact, was a relatively simple mechanism, and despite his **patent**, other manufacturers and individual planters stole the design and built their own cotton gins.

With the arrival of peace and the departure of the British naval blockade, short-staple cotton growing began to spread at an astounding rate. White southerners rushed into frontier areas, spreading cotton agriculture into Alabama and Mississippi and then into Arkansas and northern Louisiana. Even the Mississippi River seemed to present no serious barrier to this runaway expansion. In 1821 Spanish authorities gave long-time western land speculator Moses Austin permission to settle three hundred American families within a 200,000-acre tract in Texas between the Brazos and Colorado Rivers. When the elder Austin died, his son, **Stephen F. Austin**, took over the enterprise and in the aftermath of the Panic of 1819 was able to offer families large plots of land for a filing fee of only 12½ cents an acre. “I am convinced,” he exclaimed, “that I could take on fifteen hundred families as easily as three hundred if permitted to do so.” Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Austin and other **empresarios** helped thousands of hopeful cotton capitalists to expand into Mexican territory. As a result of this expansion, the South’s annual cotton crop grew by leaps and bounds. By 1840, annual exports reached nearly a million and a half bales, and increasing volumes were consumed within the United States by the mushrooming textile factories in the Northeast.

**federal Indian agents** Government officials who were responsible for negotiating treaties with Native American groups; at this time they were employed by the War Department.

**long-staple cotton** A variety of cotton with long and loosely packed pods of fiber that is easy to comb out and process.

**short-staple cotton** A variety of cotton with short and tightly packed pods of fiber in which the plant’s seeds are tangled.

**cotton boll** The pod of the cotton plant; it contains the plant’s seeds surrounded by the fluffy fiber that is spun into yarn.

**Eli Whitney** American inventor and manufacturer; his perfecting of the cotton gin revolutionized the cotton industry.

**patent** A government grant that gives the creator of an invention the sole right to produce, use, or sell that invention for a set period of time.

**Stephen F. Austin** American colonizer in Texas and leading voice in the Texas Revolution.

**empresario** In the Spanish colonies, a person who organized and led a group of settlers in exchange for land grants and the right to assess fees.

### Reviving and Reinventing Slavery

Before the emergence of cotton, when the South's agricultural system was foundering, many southerners began to question the use of slaves. In 1782 Virginia made it legal for individual masters to free their slaves, and many did so. In

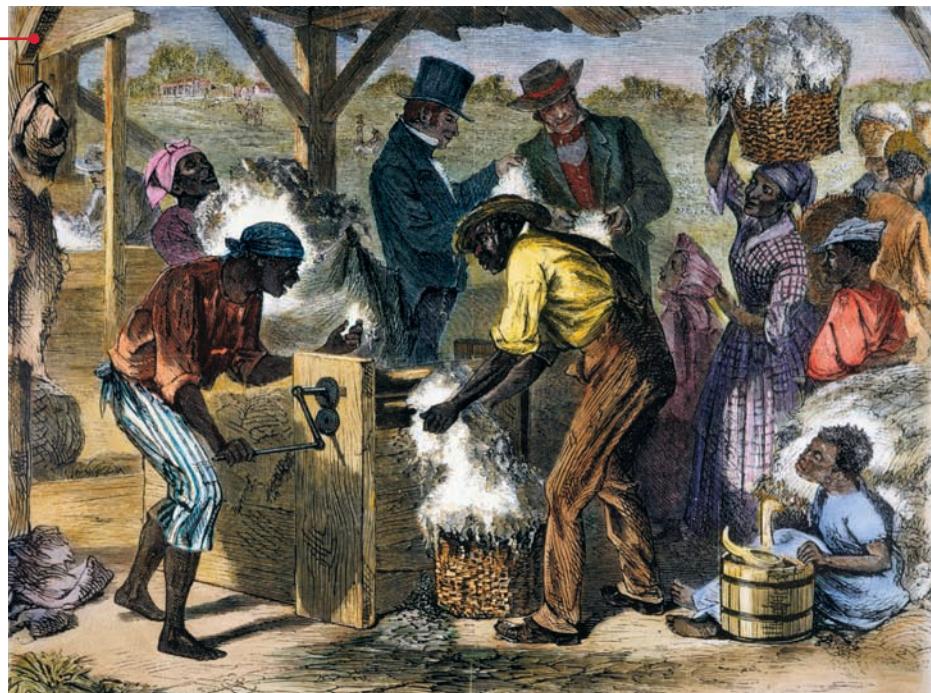
1784 Thomas Jefferson proposed (but saw defeated) a land ordinance that would have prohibited slavery in all of the nation's territories after 1800. Some southern leaders, such as Francis Scott Key, advocated abolishing slavery and transporting freed blacks to Africa. But the booming southern economy after the War of 1812 required more labor than ever. As a result, African American slavery expanded as never before.

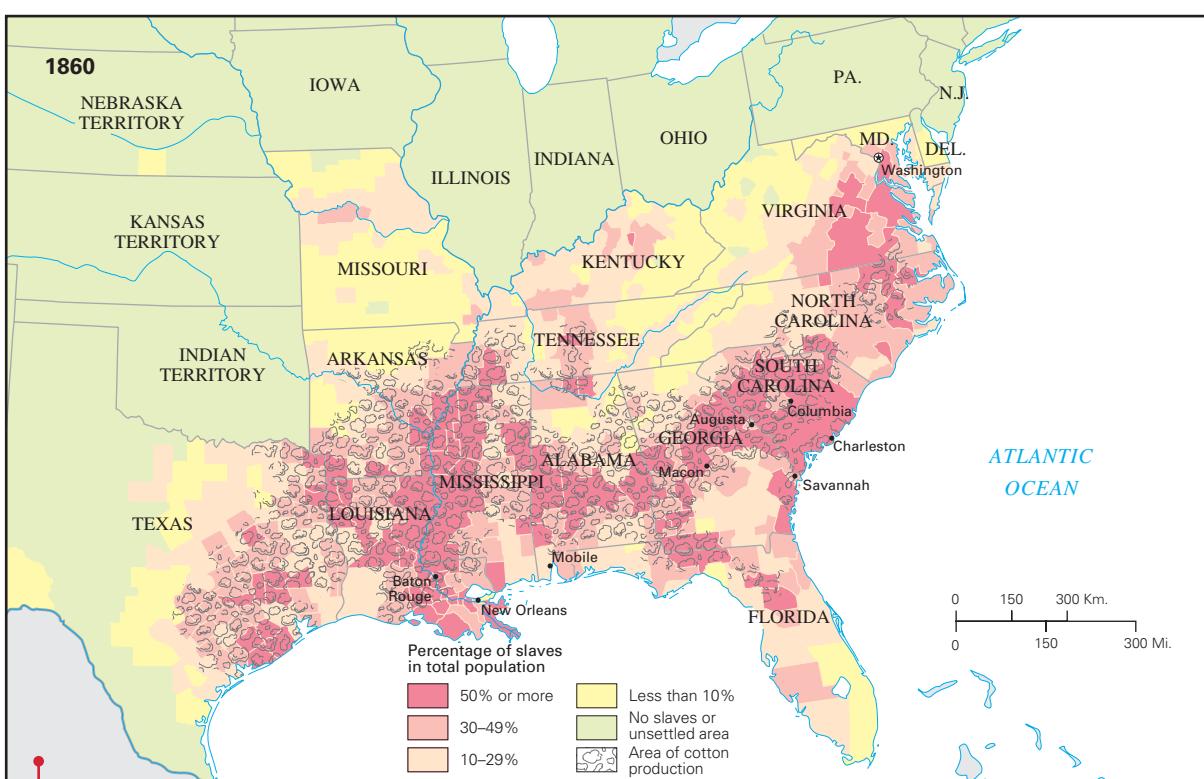
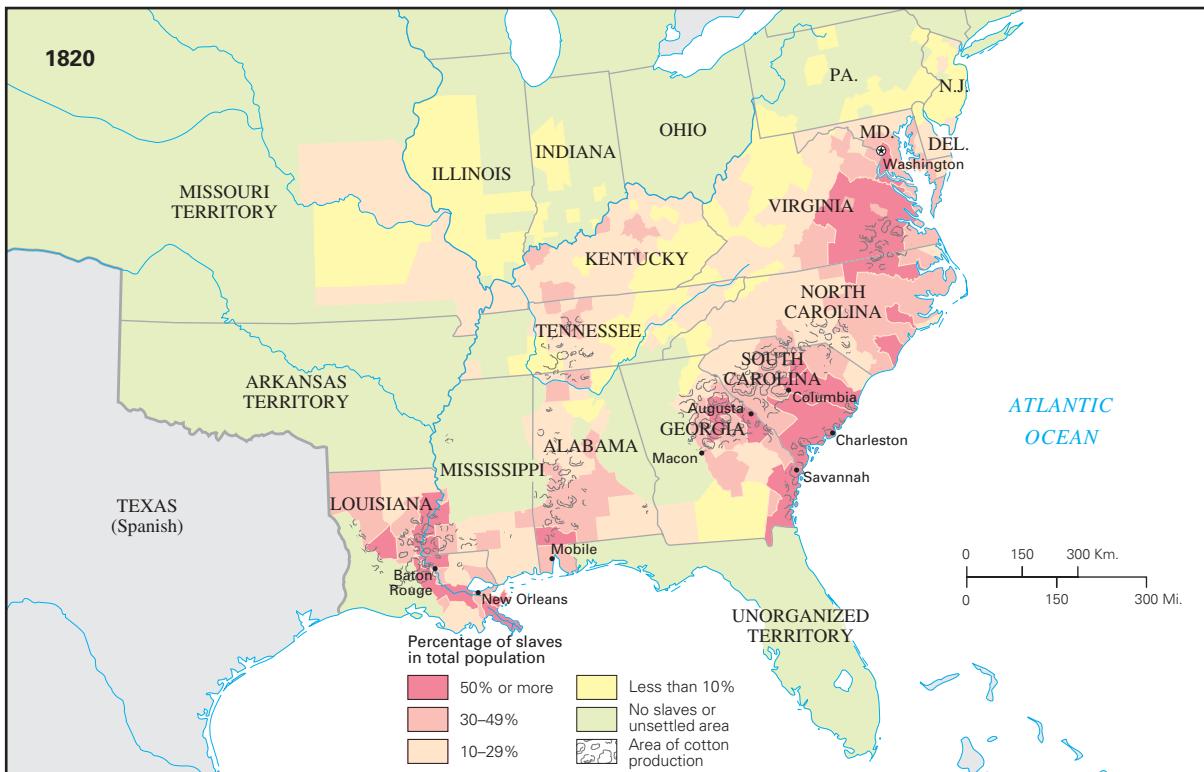
Viewed side by side, a map showing cotton agriculture and one showing slave population appear nearly identical (see Map 9.2). In the 1820s, when cotton production was most heavily concentrated in South Carolina and Georgia, the greatest density of slaves occurred in the same area. During the 1840s, as cotton growing spread to the West, slavery followed. By 1860, both cotton growing and slavery appear on the map as a continuous belt stretching from the Carolinas through Georgia and Alabama and on to the Mississippi River.

The virtually universal shift to cotton growing throughout the South brought about not only the expansion and extension of slavery but also substantial modifications to the institution itself. The wide variety of economic pursuits in which slave labor had been employed from the colonial period onward led to varied patterns in slave employment. In many parts of the South, slaves traditionally exercised a great deal of control over their work schedules as they completed assigned tasks. But the cotton business called for large gangs of predominantly unskilled workers, and increasingly slaves found themselves regimented like machines in tempo with the demands of cotton production.

At the same time, as northeastern factories were able to provide clothing, shoes, and other manufactured goods at ever more attractive prices and western farmers shipped

The invention of the cotton gin and the spread of cotton agriculture throughout the American South created an enormous new demand for slave workers and changed the nature of their work. A handful of slaves (only two in this illustration of the process) could comb through large amounts of fiber, but it took armies of field workers to produce the raw cotton that kept the machinery (and the plantation system) working.  
The Granger Collection, New York.





**MAP 9.2** Cotton Agriculture and Slave Population

Between 1820 and 1860, the expansion of cotton agriculture and the extension of slavery went hand in hand. As these maps show, cotton production was an isolated activity in 1820, and slavery remained isolated as well. By 1860, both had extended westward.

cheap pork and grain into southern markets, plantation managers found it more practical to purchase such goods rather than to produce them. Thus slaves who formerly had performed various skilled tasks such as milling and weaving found themselves pressed into much less rewarding service as brute labor in the cotton fields. To a large extent, then, specialized manufacturing in the North and large-scale commercial food production in the West permitted an intensified cotton industry in the South and helped foster the increasing dehumanization of the peculiar labor system that drove it.

## Summary

After Jefferson's triumphal first four years in office, factional disputes at home and diplomatic deadlocks with European powers began to plague the Republicans. Although the Federalists were in full retreat, many within Jefferson's own party rebelled against some of his policies. When Jefferson decided not to run for office in 1808, tapping Madison as his successor, Republicans in both the Northeast and the South bucked the president, supporting George Clinton and James Monroe, respectively.

To a large extent, the Republicans' problems were the outcome of external stresses. On the Atlantic frontier, America tried to remain neutral in the wars that engulfed Europe. On the western frontier, the Prophet and Tecumseh were successfully unifying dispossessed Indians into an alliance devoted to stopping U.S. expansion. Things went from bad to worse when Jefferson's use of economic sanctions gave rise to the worst economic depression since the beginnings of English colonization. The embargo strangled the economy in port cities, and the downward spiral in agricultural prices threatened to bankrupt many in the West and South.

The combination of economic and diplomatic constraints brought aggressive politicians to power in 1808 and 1810. Men such as William Henry Harrison expected that war with England would permit the United States finally to realize independence—forcing freedom of the seas, eliminating Indian resistance, and justifying the

conquest of the rest of North America. Despite Madison's continuing peace efforts, southern and western interests finally pushed the nation into war with England in 1812.

Although some glimmering moments of glory heartened the Americans, the war was mostly disastrous. But after generations of fighting one enemy or another, the English people demanded peace. When their final offensive in America failed to bring immediate victory in 1814, the British chose to negotiate. Finally, on Christmas Eve, the two nations signed the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war. From a diplomatic point of view, it was as though the war had never happened: everything was simply restored to pre-1812 status.

Nevertheless, in the United States the war created strong feelings of national pride and confidence, and Americans looked forward to even better things to come. In the Northeast, the constraints of war provoked entrepreneurs to explore new industries, creating the first stage of an industrial revolution in the country. In the West, the defeat of Indian resistance combined with bright economic opportunities to trigger a wave of westward migration. In the South, the economy was revolutionized by the cotton gin and the growing demand for fiber among English and then American manufacturers. Throughout the country, economic progress promised to improve life for most Americans, but as before, both African Americans and Native Americans bore much of the cost.

### Key Terms

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secede, p. 197  
Essex Junto, p. 197  
John Randolph, p. 198  
Tertium Quid, p. 198

impressment, p. 199  
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# CHAPTER 10

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### **An “Era of Good Feelings”**

The “American System” and New Economic Direction  
The Transportation Problem  
Legal Anchors for New Business Enterprise

### **IT MATTERS TODAY: The Federal Role in Interstate Commerce**

James Monroe and the Nationalist Agenda

### **Dynamic Growth and Political Consequences**

The Panic of 1819  
Economic Woes and Political Sectionalism  
The Missouri Compromise  
New Politics and the End of Good Feelings

### **The “New Man” in Politics**

Democratic Styles and Political Structure  
The Rise of “King Andrew”  
Launching Jacksonian Politics

### **The Reign of “King Andrew”**

Jackson and the Bank  
Jackson and the Indians  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**  
Jackson’s Bank Veto, 1832  
The Nullification Crisis  
**INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** Calhoun’s Defense of Nullification, 1833

### **Summary**

# The Rise of a New Nation

## 1815–1836

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: John C. Calhoun**

Little in John C. Calhoun’s background would have suggested that he would emerge as a controversial and divisive figure. A political prodigy, he had been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives at age 29, where he joined forces with other up-and-coming legislators as part of the hyper-patriotic War Hawk faction. After the War of 1812 he continued to act as a dedicated nationalist, working closely with Henry Clay to build the American System—Clay’s plan for a national **market economy**. Calhoun drafted specific bills necessary to the program; won House support for chartering a new national bank, spending federal funds for transportation development, and creating the nation’s first protective tariff package; and convinced President Madison of the program’s constitutionality. Calhoun quickly established a reputation as a solid nationalist; his admiring colleague John Quincy Adams found him to be “above all sectional and factious prejudices more than any other statesman of this Union with whom I have ever acted.”

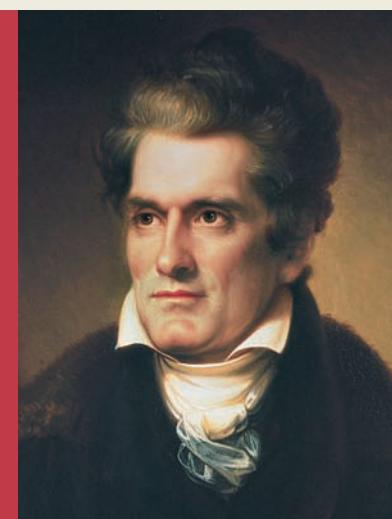
But in the wake of the economic Panic of 1819 and the angry debates over the question of slavery in Missouri, Calhoun began entertaining serious “sectional and factious prejudices.” To an extent this was because of proposals on the part of his northeastern colleagues to use higher tariffs as a way of fighting off the effects of the depression. Although these solutions made sense to manufacturers, they threatened to strangle the growing cotton industry that was fast becoming the centerpiece in the economy of the South. But population growth in the Northeast and increasing economic specialization in parts of the West gave protariff forces all the votes they needed to promote their political agenda in Congress. Soon, Calhoun came to believe, the Northeast would emerge as a tyrannical mother country, and the rest of the nation would become its oppressed and dependent colonies.

Fearful that incoming president Andrew Jackson was even more nationalistic than his predecessors, in 1828 Calhoun drafted a pamphlet called *The South Carolina*

#### **JOHN C. CALHOUN**

*As a young congressman in the years bracketing the War of 1812, John C. Calhoun was celebrated as a leading American nationalist. But in the years following the economic panic of 1819 and the sectional crisis in Missouri, Calhoun chose to abandon nationalism in favor of states’ rights and southern sectionalism. As vehement in his new sentiments as he had been in his earlier ones, Calhoun became an icon among proslavery advocates for generations to come.*

Peale, Rembrandt, “John C. Calhoun,” 1838, Oil on Canvas. 30 7/8 x 25 3/4 inches. Gibbes Museum of Art, Bequest of Martha Calhoun Frost. © Image Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association.



*Exposition and Protest.* Drawing on ideas enunciated years before by Madison and Jefferson in their Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, Calhoun argued that the federal union was nothing more than a convenient mechanism for carrying out the collective will of the states. As such, its sovereignty was not superior to that of the states. More importantly, if a state determined that a federal law violated the basic rights of its citizens, a local assembly could declare that law null—having no legal force—within its borders. This doctrine became known as nullification.

By the time of his death in 1850, Calhoun’s role as a leading nationalist had been all but forgotten, replaced by his new legacy as the virtual patron saint for planters’ rights and southern independence. The transformations that unsettled the nation turned Calhoun completely around, and his new legacy would affect the nation every bit as profoundly as had his earlier one.

**market economy** An economic system based on the buying and selling of goods and services, in which prices are determined by the forces of supply and demand.

**T**hough certainly more talented than many Americans and more powerful than most, Calhoun nonetheless was typical of his generation in many ways. Like his contemporaries he was angered by British assaults on American sovereignty and lobbied for war in 1812. Following the war he embraced the spirit of national unity and good feelings to promote economic consolidation, leading Congress to revolutionize public finance laws in order to encourage expansive growth. And these policies succeeded: the United States experienced an exciting growth spurt after 1815. But when the speculative bubble burst in 1819, the optimism and unity that had characterized the country faltered.

Calhoun was also typical of a growing number of Americans in his views on politics. Like his fellow prodigy Henry Clay, Calhoun had made politics a career from very early in life. Of course, Calhoun and Clay were property owners, and their families had always exercised political rights, but during the 1820s more and more Americans gained those same rights and took politics every bit as seriously as Calhoun and his privileged colleagues. In this highly charged atmosphere, matters of state became—for the first time in the nation’s history—a topic for debate among people from all regions and from a broad cross-section of occupations and communities. As for Calhoun, politics for these newly enfranchised voters was not some gentleman’s game but a form of personal combat designed to make their own lives better and to test their wills and their loyalties. To such highly motivated men, even the risk of civil war was an acceptable price for claiming their personal and sectional rights.

## An “Era of Good Feelings”

- ★ **What were the sources for Americans’ optimism as they emerged from the War of 1812?**
- ★ **What steps did the American government take to capitalize on this optimism?**
- ★ **How did new developments in the nation influence foreign affairs?**

James Madison had been the butt of jokes and the cause of dissension within his own party during the War of 1812, but he emerged from the war a national hero with considerable political clout. Although his fellow Republicans may have considered his wartime policies indecisive, after the war Madison immediately seized the political initiative to

# Chronology

<b>1807</b>	Robert Fulton tests steam-powered Clermont	<b>1824–1828</b>	Suffrage reform triples voter population
<b>1810</b>	<i>Fletcher v. Peck</i>	<b>1824</b>	<i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i>
<b>1814</b>	Treaty of Ghent ends War of 1812 Defeat of Napoleon		Western congressmen join northeastern congressmen to pass increased protective tariffs
<b>1814–1815</b>	Hartford Convention		Jackson wins electoral plurality and popular majority in presidential election
<b>1815</b>	Government funds Cumberland Road Stephen Decatur defeats Barbary pirates	<b>1825</b>	House of Representatives elects John Quincy Adams president
<b>1816</b>	Tariff of 1816 First successful steamboat run, Pittsburgh to New Orleans James Monroe elected president		Prairie du Chien treaties Completion of Erie Canal
<b>1817</b>	Second Bank of the United States opens for business Rush-Bagot Agreement Construction of Erie Canal begins Congress suspends installment payments on public land purchases	<b>1826</b>	Disappearance of William Morgan and beginning of Antimasons
<b>1818</b>	Convention of 1818 Andrew Jackson invades Spanish Florida	<b>1827</b>	Ratification of Cherokee constitution Federal removal of Winnebagos
<b>1819</b>	<i>Dartmouth College v. Woodward</i> <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> Adams-Onís Treaty Missouri Territory applies for statehood Panic of 1819	<b>1828</b>	Tariff of Abominations Jackson elected president Publication of <i>The South Carolina Exposition and Protest</i>
<b>1820</b>	Monroe reelected Missouri Compromise Northeastern congressmen propose protective tariffs and reduction of public land prices	<b>1830</b>	First issue of the <i>Cherokee Phoenix</i> Webster-Hayne debate
<b>1821</b>	Mexico gains independence from Spain	<b>1831</b>	Indian Removal Act
<b>1823</b>	Monroe Doctrine	<b>1832</b>	Federal removal of Sauks and Choctaws <i>Cherokee Nation v. Georgia</i> <i>Worcester v. Georgia</i>
			Bank War Nullification crisis Black Hawk War Seminole War begins
		<b>1834</b>	Abolition of slavery in British Empire
		<b>1836–1838</b>	Federal removal of Creeks, Chickasaws, and Cherokees

**Era of Good Feelings** The period from 1816 to 1823, when the decline of the Federalist Party and the end of the War of 1812 gave rise to a time of political cooperation.

inaugurate vigorous new diplomatic and domestic programs. His successor, James Monroe, then picked up the beat, pressing on with a new nationalistic Republican agenda. The nationalism that arose after the war seemed to bring political dissension to a close. Commenting on the decline of partisan politics, a Federalist newspaper in Boston proclaimed the dawn of an “Era of Good Feelings.”

### The "American System" and New Economic Direction

The nation was much more unified politically in 1815 than it had been for years. The war's outcome and the growth that began to take place immediately following the peace settlement had largely silenced Madison's critics within the

Republican Party. And during the waning days of the war, extreme Federalists had so embarrassed their party that they were at a severe political disadvantage.

The Essex Junto was primarily responsible for the Federalists' embarrassment. The junto had capitalized on the many military blunders and growing national debt to cast Republicans in a bad light and was drawing increasing support in the Northeast. In mid-December 1814, the Essex Junto staged the Hartford Convention, threatening to secede from the union unless Congress repealed the Embargo of 1813 and passed the seven constitutional amendments the junto had been demanding since its formation. However, news of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, and of the American victory in the Battle of New Orleans, caused many to view the Federalists' efforts as treasonous, and party popularity underwent a steep decline.

Facing no meaningful opposition, Madison chose in December 1815 to launch an aggressive new domestic policy. He challenged Congress to correct the economic ills that had caused the depression and helped to propel the nation into war. He also encouraged the states to invest in the nation's future by financing transportation systems and other internal improvements. Former critics such as Clay, Calhoun, and DeWitt Clinton quickly rallied behind the president and his nationalistic economic and political agenda.

Clay took the lead. He had come to Congress as one of the War Hawks in 1810 and had quickly become the dominant voice among the younger representatives. Born in Virginia in 1777, Clay had moved at the age of 20 to the wilds of Kentucky to practice law and carve out a career in politics. He was fantastically successful, becoming Speaker of the Kentucky state assembly when he was only 30 years old and winning a seat in the House of Representatives four years later. He became Speaker of the House during the prewar crisis. Now aligning himself firmly with the new economic agenda, Clay became its champion, calling it the **American System**.

What congressional Republicans had in mind was to create a national market economy. In the colonial period and increasingly thereafter, local market economies grew up around the trading and manufacturing centers of the Northeast. Individuals in these areas produced single items for cash sale and used the cash they earned to purchase goods produced by others. Specialization was the natural outcome. Farmers, for example, chose to grow only one or two crops and to sell the whole harvest for cash, which they used to buy various items they had once raised or made for themselves. Calhoun and others wanted to see such interdependence on a much larger scale. They envisioned a time when whole regions would specialize in producing commodities for which geography, climate, and the temperament of the people made each locale most suitable. Agricultural regions in the West, for example, would produce food for the industrializing Northeast and the fiber-producing South. The North would depend on the South for efficiently produced cotton, and both South and West would depend on the Northeast for manufactured goods. Improved transportation systems would make this flow of goods possible, and a strong national currency would ensure orderly trade between states. Advocates of the American System were confident that the balance eventually established among regions would free the nation as a whole from economic dependence on manufacturing centers in Europe.

Clay and his cohorts recognized that one of the first steps in bringing all this about would have to be a national banking authority. True, Republicans had persistently

**American System** An economic plan sponsored by nationalists in Congress; it was intended to capitalize on regional differences to spur U.S. economic growth and the domestic production of goods previously bought from foreign manufacturers.

opposed Alexander Hamilton's Bank of the United States and had killed it in 1811. During the war, however, bankers, merchants, and foreign shippers had chosen not to accept the paper currency issued by local and state banks. The postwar call for a unified national economy prompted Republicans to press again for a national currency and for a national bank to regulate its circulation. In 1816 Calhoun introduced legislation chartering a Second Bank of the United States, which Congress approved overwhelmingly. The Second Bank had many of the same powers and responsibilities as Hamilton's bank. Congress provided \$7 million of its \$35 million in opening capital and appointed one-fifth of its board of directors. The Second Bank opened for business in Philadelphia on January 1, 1817.

**protective tariff** Tax on imported goods intended to make them more expensive than similar domestic goods, thus protecting the market for goods produced at home.

**Tariff of 1816** First protective tariff in U.S. history; its purpose was to protect America's fledgling textile industry.

Calhoun took the lead in advocating **protective tariffs** to help the fledgling industries that had hatched during the war. Helped by the embargoes, American cotton-spinning plants had increased in number rapidly between 1808 and 1815. But with the return of open trade at war's end, British merchants dumped accumulated inventories of cotton and woolen cloth onto the U.S. market below cost in an effort to hamper further American development. Although some New England voices protested tariffs as unfair government interference, most northerners supported protection. Most southerners and westerners, however, remained leery of its impact on consumer prices. Still, shouting with nationalistic fervor about American economic independence, westerners such as Clay and southerners such as Calhoun were able to raise enough support to pass Madison's proposed **Tariff of 1816**, opening the way for continued tariff legislation in the years to come.

The popularity of these measures was apparent in the outcome of the 1816 elections. Madison's handpicked successor, fellow Virginian James Monroe, won by a decisive electoral majority: 184 votes to Federalist Rufus King's 34. Congressional Republicans enjoyed a similar sweep, winning more than three-fourths of the seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Republicans, presenting a powerful mandate and the political clout necessary to carry it out, immediately set about expanding on the new nationalistic agenda.

### The Transportation Problem

In the years before the War of 1812, travel on the nation's roads was a wearying experience. People who could afford transportation by stagecoach were crammed into an open wagon bouncing behind four horses on muddy, rutted, winding roads. Stagecoaches crept along at 4 miles per hour—when weather permitted them to move at all. And the enjoyment of such dubious luxury did not come cheaply: tolls for each mile of travel equaled the cost of a pint of good whiskey.

**turnpike** A road on which tolls are collected at gates set up along the way; private companies hoping to make a profit from the tolls built the first turnpikes.

Recognizing the need for more and better roads, entrepreneurs sought to profit by building private **turnpikes** between heavily traveled points. Since the early 1790s, states had allowed private companies to make a profit from the tolls they collected at gates set up along privately financed roads. But despite such private efforts, it was clear to many after the war that only the large-scale resources available to state and federal governments could make a practical difference in the transportation picture. Immediately after the war, Calhoun introduced legislation in Congress to finance a national transportation program. Congress approved, but Madison vetoed the bill, stating that the Constitution did not authorize federal spending on projects designed to benefit single states. But Calhoun finally won Madison's support by convincing the president that a government-funded national road between Cumberland, Maryland, and Wheeling, Virginia, was a military and postal necessity and therefore the initial federal expenditure of \$30,000

for the **Cumberland Road** was permissible under the Constitution. That constitutional hurdle cleared, actual construction began in 1815.

Though helpful, roads still could not make hauling bulky commercial items financially feasible. Water transportation was the most practical, but that would require a network of canals. New York State was most successful at canal development. In 1817 the state started work on a canal that would run more than 350 miles from Lake Erie at Buffalo to the Hudson River at Albany. Aided by Governor DeWitt Clinton's unwavering support and the gentle terrain in western New York, engineers planned the **Erie Canal**. Three thousand workers dug the huge ditch and built the **locks**, dams, and **aqueducts** that would transport barges carrying freight and passengers across the state. The last section of the canal was completed and the first barge made its way from Buffalo to Albany and then on to New York City in 1825.

Canals were really little more than extensions of natural river courses, and fighting the currents of the great rivers that they connected remained a problem. But in 1807 Robert Fulton wedded steam technology borrowed from England with his own boat design to prove that steam-powered shipping was possible. Unfortunately, his design required deep water and large amounts of fuel to carry a limited **payload**, demands that rendered what many called "Fulton's Folly" impractical for most of America's rivers. After the war, however, Henry M. Shreve, a career boat pilot and captain, began experimenting with new designs and technologies. Borrowing the hull design of the shallow-draft, broad-beamed keelboats that had been sailing up and down inland streams for generations, Shreve added two lightweight, high-compression steam engines, each one driving an independent side wheel. He also added an upper deck for passengers, creating the now-familiar multistoried steamboats of southern lore. Funded by merchants in Wheeling, Virginia—soon to be the western terminus for the Cumberland Road—Shreve successfully piloted one of his newly designed boats upriver, from Wheeling to Pittsburgh. Then, in 1816, he made the first successful run south, all the way to New Orleans.

### Legal Anchors for New Business Enterprise

President Madison had raised serious constitutional concerns when Henry Clay and his congressional clique proposed spending federal money on road development. Though Calhoun was able to ease the president's mind on this specific matter, many constitutional issues needed clarification if the government was going to play the economic role that nationalists envisioned.

In 1819 the Supreme Court took an important step in clarifying the federal government's role in national economic life. The case arose over an effort by the state of Maryland to raise money by placing **revenue stamps** on federal currency. When James McCulloch, a clerk at the Baltimore branch of the Bank of the United States, refused to apply the stamps, he was indicted by the state. In the resulting Supreme Court case, *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), the majority ruled that the states could not impose taxes on federal institutions and that McCulloch was right in refusing to comply with Maryland's revenue law. But more important, in rejecting Maryland's argument that the federal government was simply a creation of the states and was therefore subject to state taxation, Chief Justice John Marshall wrote, "The Constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof are supreme: that they control the constitution and laws of the respective states, and cannot be controlled by them." With this, Marshall declared his binding opinion that federal law was superior to state law in all matters.

Marshall demonstrated this principle again and reinforced it five years later in the landmark case of *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824). In 1808, the state of New York had recognized

**Cumberland Road** The initial section of what would be called the "National Road," a highway built with federal funds that was later extended to Vandalia, Illinois, and beyond.

**Erie Canal** A 350-mile canal stretching from Buffalo to Albany; it revolutionized shipping in New York State.

**lock** A section of canal with gates at each end, used to raise or lower boats from one level to another by admitting or releasing water; locks allow canals to compensate for changes in terrain.

**aqueduct** An elevated structure raising a canal to bridge rivers, canyons, or other obstructions.

**payload** The part of a cargo that generates revenue, as opposed to the part needed to fire the boiler or supply the crew.

**revenue stamps** Stickers affixed to taxed items by government officials indicating that the tax has been paid.

**McCulloch v. Maryland** Supreme Court case (1819) in which the majority ruled that federal authority is superior to that of individual states and that states cannot control or tax federal operations within their borders.

**Gibbons v. Ogden** Supreme Court case (1824) in which the majority ruled that the authority of Congress is absolute in matters of interstate commerce.



# It Matters Today

## THE FEDERAL ROLE IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE

*Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824) established a strong precedent that had far-reaching consequences. At the time of the ruling, interstate commerce was fairly inconsequential; most people in the United States depended on themselves and their immediate neighbors for their needs. But with this ruling in place, as interstate commerce expanded, the power of the federal government expanded, too. It is now virtually impossible to engage in any sort of activity that does not involve interstate commerce. Even in the most private and intimate moments of our lives, objects we use often were manufactured, in whole or in part, in another state; if not, they likely were carried to our local community on interstate highways; and in all cases they were paid for using federal reserve notes. Marshall's decision granting absolute federal authority over interstate commerce thus justified central government jurisdiction over a wide variety of our everyday activities. For example, many civil rights cases during the

1960s and after landed in federal court because interstate commerce was involved. This is a reality that forms one of the most fundamental aspects of our lives in the United States today.

- Reflecting upon the development of canal and road systems during the early nineteenth century, how did the Supreme Court's decisions concerning interstate commerce and federal supremacy influence the way the nation developed?
- Choose an activity in which you engage on a regular basis—an athletic event, cultural activity, religious act, or something entirely personal and private; virtually anything—and examine what role interstate commerce plays in it. In what ways might the involvement of interstate commerce give the federal government the right to influence or even control that activity? Do you think that degree of influence is justified?

Fulton's accomplishments in steamboating by granting him an exclusive contract to run steamboats on rivers in that state. Fulton then used this monopoly power to sell licenses to various operators, including Aaron Ogden, who ran a ferry service between New York and New Jersey. Another individual, Thomas Gibbons, was also running a steamboat service in the same area, but he was operating under license from the federal government. When Ogden accused Gibbons of violating his contractual monopoly in a New York court, Gibbons took refuge in federal court. It finally fell to Marshall's Supreme Court to resolve the conflict. Consistent with its earlier decision, the Court ruled in favor of Gibbons, arguing that the New York monopoly conflicted with federal authority and was therefore invalid. In cases of interstate commerce, it ruled, Congress's authority "is complete in itself" and the states could not challenge it.

But it was going to take more than federal authority and investment to revolutionize the economy. Private money would be needed as well, and that too required some constitutional clarification. At issue were contracts, the basis for all business transactions, and their security from interference by either private or public challengers.

One landmark case, *Fletcher v. Peck*, came before Marshall's Court in 1810. In this case, the Court ruled that even if a contract was obtained fraudulently, it still was binding and the state legislature had no right to overturn it. Nor, it ruled in a later case, could a state modify a standing contract. That case, *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), involved Dartmouth College's founding charter, which specified that new members of the board of trustees were to be appointed by the current board. In 1816 the New Hampshire state legislature tried to take over the college by passing a bill that would allow the state's governor to appoint board members. The college brought suit, claiming that its

**Fletcher v. Peck** Supreme Court case (1810) in which the majority ruled that the original land sale contract rescinded by the Georgia legislature was binding, establishing the superiority of contracts over legislation.

**Dartmouth College v. Woodward** Supreme Court case (1819) in which the majority ruled that private contracts are sacred and cannot be modified by state legislatures.

charter was a legal contract and that the legislature had no right to abridge it. Announcing the Court's decision, Marshall noted that the Constitution protected the sanctity of contracts and that state legislatures could not interfere with them.

### James Monroe and the Nationalist Agenda

While Congress and the courts were firmly in the hands of forward-looking leaders, the presidency passed in 1816 to former Secretary of State James Monroe. Personally conservative, Monroe nonetheless was a strong nationalist as well as a graceful statesman. He had served primarily as a diplomat during the contentious period that preceded the War of 1812, and as president he turned his diplomatic skills to the task of calming political disputes. He was the first president since Washington to take a national goodwill tour, during which he persistently urged various political factions to merge their interests for the benefit of the nation at large.

Monroe's cabinet was well chosen to carry out the task of smoothing political rivalries while flexing nationalistic muscles. He selected John Quincy Adams, son and heir of Yankee Federalist John Adams, as secretary of state because of his diplomatic skill and to win political support in New England. Monroe tapped southern nationalist Calhoun for secretary of war and balanced his appointment with that of southern states' rights advocate William C. Crawford as secretary of the treasury. With his team assembled, Monroe launched a program to increase the nation's control over the North American continent and improve its position in world affairs.

Madison had already taken steps toward initiating a more aggressive diplomatic policy. Taking advantage of U.S. involvement in the War of 1812, Barbary pirates had resumed raids on American shipping. In response, Madison ordered a military force back to the Mediterranean in June 1815. With ten U.S. warships threatening to level the port of Algiers, the Algerians and the rest of the Barbary pirates signed treaties ending the practice of exacting **tribute**. They also released all American hostages and agreed to pay compensation for past seizures of American ships.

Now, the first matter Adams addressed was the Treaty of Ghent (1814), which had ended the 1812 war. The treaty left hanging the issue of the **demilitarization** of the Great Lakes boundary between the United States and British Canada. In the 1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement, both nations agreed to cut back their Great Lakes fleets to only a few vessels, and in the Convention of 1818, the British agreed to honor American fishing rights in the Atlantic, to recognize a boundary between the Louisiana Territory and Canada at the 49th parallel, and to occupy the Oregon Territory jointly with the United States.

With these northern border issues settled, Adams set his sights on defining the nation's southern and southwestern frontiers. Conditions in Spanish Florida were extremely unsettled. Pirates used Florida as a base for launching raids against American settlements and shipping, and runaway slaves found it a safe haven in their flight from southern plantations. In December 1817, General Andrew Jackson wrote the president advocating the invasion of Spanish Florida. "Let it be signified to me through any channel . . . that the possession of the Floridas would be desirable to the United States, and in sixty days it will be accomplished."

A short time later, Secretary of War Calhoun ordered Jackson to lead a military expedition into southern Georgia to patrol its border with Florida and keep raiders and runaway slaves from crossing it. Jackson, however, crossed the border (he later claimed that Monroe secretly authorized him to invade Florida). He forced the Spanish government to flee to Cuba, and Spain vigorously protested. Secretary of War Calhoun and others recommended that the general be severely disciplined. But Adams saw an opportunity

**tribute** A payment of money or other valuables that one group makes to another as the price of security.

**demilitarization** The removal of military forces from a region and the restoration of civilian control.

**Adams-Onís Treaty** Treaty between the United States and Spain in 1819 that ceded Florida to the United States, ended any Spanish claims in Oregon, and recognized Spanish rights in the American Southwest.

**unilateral** Undertaken or issued by only one side and thus not involving an agreement made with others.

**Monroe Doctrine** President Monroe's 1823 statement declaring the Americas closed to further European colonization and discouraging European interference in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

to settle the Florida border issue. He announced that Jackson's raid was an act of self-defense that would be repeated unless Spain could police the area adequately. Adams knew that Spain could not guarantee American security and would either have to give up Florida or stand by and watch the United States take it by force. Bowing to reality, Spanish minister Don Luis de Onís ceded Florida in the **Adams-Onís Treaty** of 1819. The United States got all of Florida in exchange for releasing Spain from \$5 million in damage claims resulting from border raids. Spain also recognized the legality of the Louisiana Purchase and relinquished all claims to the Oregon Country in exchange for acknowledgment of its claims in the American Southwest.

Spain's inability to police its New World territories also led to a more general diplomatic problem. As the result of Spain's weakness, many of its colonies in Latin America had rebelled and established themselves as independent republics. Fearful of the anticolonial example being set in the Western Hemisphere, most members of the Congress of Vienna seemed poised to help Spain reclaim its overseas empire. Neither Britain, which had developed a thriving trade with the new Latin American republics, nor the United States believed that Europe should be allowed to intervene in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. In 1823 British foreign minister George Canning proposed that the United States and Britain form an alliance to end European meddling in Latin America. Most members of Monroe's cabinet supported allied action, but Adams instead suggested a **unilateral** statement to the effect that "the American continents by the free and independent condition which they have assumed, and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power."

Monroe's indecision regarding Adams's advice finally vanished in November 1823 when he learned that the European alliance designed to restore Spain's colonies was faltering. With the immediate threat removed, Monroe rejected Canning's offer. In Monroe's annual December message, he wrote that the United States would regard any effort by European countries "to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." He went on to define any further attempt at European intervention in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere as a virtual act of war against the United States and at the same time promised that the United States would steer clear of affairs in Europe.

The **Monroe Doctrine**, as this statement was later called, was exactly the proud assertion of principle "in favor of liberty" that Monroe had hoped for. It immediately won the support of the American people. The Monroe Doctrine appeared to announce the arrival of the United States on the international scene. Both Europeans and Latin Americans, however, thought it was a meaningless statement. Rhetoric aside, the policy depended on the British navy and on Britain's informal commitment to New World autonomy.

## Dynamic Growth and Political Consequences

★ **How did the global economic situation contribute to American economics between 1815 and 1820?**

★ **How did economic growth and panic contribute to sectional conflict and political contention?**

During the Napoleonic wars, massive armies had drained Europe's manpower, laid waste to crops, and tied up ships, making European nations dependent on America. After those wars ended in 1815, Europeans continued to need American food and manufactures

as they rebuilt a peacetime economy. Encouraged by European markets and expanding credit offered by the Second Bank of the United States, budding southern planters, northern manufacturers, and western and southwestern farmers embarked on a frenzy of speculation. They rushed to borrow against what they were sure was a golden future to buy equipment, land, and slaves. As long as economic conditions remained good, there was little reason for conflict, but when the speculative boom collapsed, sectional tensions increased dramatically.

### The Panic of 1819

Earlier changes in federal land policy had contributed to the rise of speculation. In 1800 and again in 1804, Congress passed bills lowering the minimum number of acres of federal land an individual could purchase and the minimum price

per acre. After 1804, the minimum purchase became 160 acres and the minimum price, \$1.64 per acre. The bill also permitted farmers to pay the government in **installments**. For most Americans, the minimum investment of \$262.40 was still out of reach, but the installment option encouraged many to take the risk and buy farms they could barely afford.

Land speculators complicated matters considerably. Taking advantage of the new land prices, they too jumped into the game, buying land on credit. Unlike farmers, however, speculators never intended to put the land into production. They hoped to subdivide and sell it to people who could not afford to buy 160-acre lots directly from the government. Speculators also offered installment loans, pyramiding the already huge tower of debt.

Banks—both relatively unsupervised state banks and the Second Bank of the United States—then added to the problem. Farmers who bought land on credit seldom had enough cash to purchase farm equipment, seed, materials for housing, and the other supplies necessary to put the land to productive use. So the banks extended liberal credit on top of the credit already extended by the government and by land developers. Farmers had acreage and tools, but they also had an enormous debt.

Congress noted the beginning of the crisis late in 1817 and tried to head off disaster by tightening credit. The government stopped installment payments on new land purchases and demanded that they be transacted in hard currency. The Second Bank of the United States followed suit in 1818, demanding immediate repayment of loans in either gold or silver. State banks then followed and were joined by land speculators. Instead of curing the problem, however, tightening credit and recalling loans drove the economy over the edge. The speculative balloon burst, leaving nothing but a mass of debt behind. This economic catastrophe became known as the **Panic of 1819**. Six years of economic depression were to follow.

### Economic Woes and Political Sectionalism

Despite Monroe's efforts to merge southern, northern, and nationalist interests during the Era of Good Feelings, the Panic of 1819 drove a wedge between the nation's geographical sections. The depression touched each of the major regions differently, calling for conflicting solutions. For the next several years, the halls of Congress rang with debates rooted in each section's particular economic needs.

Tariffs were one method for handling economic emergencies, and as the Panic of 1819 spread economic devastation throughout the country, legislators from Pennsylvania and the Middle Atlantic states, southern New England, and then Ohio and Kentucky began clamoring for protection. Others disagreed, turning tariffs into the issue that would pit region against region more violently than any other during these years.

**installments** Partial payments of a debt to be made at regular intervals until the entire debt is repaid.

**Panic of 1819** A financial panic that began when the Second Bank of the United States tightened credit and recalled government loans.

Before the adoption of modern bankruptcy laws, it was common for people to be put in prison when they could not pay their debts. One impact of the Panic of 1819 was a huge upturn in such imprisonments. Newspapers like *The Remembrancer, or Debtors Prison Recorder*, which began publication with this issue on April 8, 1820, called for reform in debtor laws and also reported gruesome stories about the sufferings of previously respectable people who found themselves in debtors' prison through no fault of their own. *Debtors Prison Recorder*, Vol. 1, No. 1, New York, Saturday, April 8, 1820.

## THE REMEMBRANCER,

OR

## DEBTORS PRISON RECORDER.

"HE WHO'S ENTOMB'D WITHIN A PRISON'S WALLS  
ENDURES THE AGONIE OF A LIVING DEATH"

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY APRIL 8, 1820.

No. 1.

THE  
DEBTORS PRISON RECORDER  
IS ISSUED FROM THE PRESS OF  
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### TO THE PUBLIC.

THE chief object of this publication  
will be to spread before an enlightened  
public the deplorable effects resulting  
from the barbarous practice of impris-  
onment for debt—to exhibit the  
misery of its wretched victims, and  
the unfeeling conduct of un pitying cre-  
ditors. By these means, "with truth  
as its guide, and justice for its object,"  
it will, it is hoped, gradually prepare  
the minds of the community for the  
entire abolition of a law which exists  
a dishonor to the precepts of Chris-  
tianity, and as a blot on the statute  
book.

It will be published weekly, in an  
octavo form, each number to consist  
of eight pages, comprising a succinct  
and correct history of the interesting  
incidents which daily occur in the  
debtors prison—a correct Journal of  
prisoners received and discharged from

time to time, with such remarks as may  
grow out of peculiar persecution or  
other causes; nor will it neglect to  
announce the number of those who are  
supplied with food from that inestima-  
ble body, the Humane Society, to  
whom the profits of this publication  
will be faithfully applied, as a small  
testimonial of the gratitude felt by the  
unfortunate inmates of the prison, for  
their distinguished beneficence. It will  
contain interesting extracts from the  
latest European and American publi-  
cations. In its columns will be found  
a variety of communications on various  
interesting subjects, from gentlemen  
without the prison walls, who have  
kindly volunteered their services to  
furnish us with essays on the ARTS AND  
SCIENCES, criticisms on the DRAMA,  
POETRY, &c.

This work will be edited, and its  
matter carefully revised by several  
prisoners, who, if they cannot them-  
selves enjoy the benefits of their la-  
bor, may at least feel a pleasure in  
the reflection that after ages will be-  
stow a pitying tear on their sufferings,  
and bless them for the exertions made  
to rescue their country from the only  
vestige of feudal tyranny remaining  
in a land that boasts of freedom.

The small pittance paid for its pe-  
rusal, will, it is believed, procure for  
it the patronage of a generous public,  
who will be amply remunerated in  
performing a duty subserving the great  
and benign ends of Charity, while in  
return they are furnished with a spe-  
cies of reading not to be met with in  
any other publication.

Farmers were split on the tariff issue. Irrespective of where they lived, so-called yeo-  
man farmers favored a free market that would keep the price of the manufactures they  
had to buy as low as possible. In contrast, the increasing number of commercial farm-  
ers—those who had chosen to follow Clay's ideas and were specializing to produce cash  
crops of raw wool, hemp, and wheat—joined mill owners, factory managers, and indus-  
trial workers in supporting protection against the foreign dumping of such products. So  
did those westerners who were producing raw minerals such as iron that were in high  
demand in the industrializing economy.

Southern commercial planters, however, did not join with their western counter-  
parts in favoring protection. After supporting the protective Tariff of 1816, Calhoun and  
other southerners became firm opponents of tariffs. Their dislike of protection reflect-  
ed a complex economic reality. Britain, not the United States, was the South's primary

market for raw cotton and its main supplier of manufactured goods. Protective tariffs raised the price of such goods as well as the possibility that Britain might enact a **retaliatory tariff** on cotton imports from the South. If that happened, southerners would pay more for manufactures but receive less profit from cotton.

When, in 1820, northern congressmen proposed a major increase in tariff rates, small farmers in the West and cotton growers in the South combined to defeat the measure. Northerners then wooed congressmen from the West, where small farmers were begging for a relief from high land prices and debt. The northerners supported one bill that lowered the minimum price of public land to \$1.25 per acre and another that allowed farmers who had bought land before 1820 to pay off their debts at the reduced price. The bill also extended the time over which those who were on the installment plan could make payments. Then, in 1822, northerners backed a bill authorizing increased federal spending on the Cumberland Road, an interest vital to westerners. Such inducements had the desired outcome. In 1824 western congressmen joined with northern manufacturing interests to pass a greatly increased tariff.

### The Missouri Compromise

As each of the nation's regions fought to implement specific solutions to the economic crisis, the regional balance of power in Congress became a matter of crucial importance. This delicate balance began to wobble immediately in 1819 when

the Missouri Territory applied for statehood. New York congressman James Tallmadge Jr. realized that if Missouri was admitted as a free state, its economy would resemble the economies of states in the Old Northwest, and its congressmen would be susceptible to northern political deal making. Tallmadge then proposed that no new slaves be taken into Missouri and that those already in the territory be emancipated gradually. Southerners likewise understood that if Missouri was admitted as a slave state, its congressional **bloc** would undoubtedly support the southern position on tariffs and other key issues. They unified to oppose the **Tallmadge Amendment**.

Both sides in the debate were deeply entrenched, but in 1820 Henry Clay suggested a compromise. Late in 1819, Maine had separated from Massachusetts and applied for admission to the United States as a separate state. The compromise proposed by Clay was to admit Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state. Clay also proposed that after the admission of Missouri, slavery be banned forever in the rest of the Louisiana Territory above 36°30' north latitude—the line that formed Missouri's southern border (see Map 10.1). With this provision, Congress approved the **Missouri Compromise**, and the issue of slavery in the territories faded for a time.

The Missouri crisis was more than a simple debate over economic interests and congressional balances. Although economic issues had caused the conflict, slavery—its expansion and, for a few, its very existence—had become part of a struggle between sections over national power. For aged Federalists such as Rufus King, the crisis offered an opportunity to use the slavery issue to woo northerners and westerners away from the traditionally southern-centered Republican coalition. DeWitt Clinton and other northeastern dissidents joined with former Federalists to criticize their party's southern leadership and challenge Monroe's dominance.

### New Politics and the End of Good Feelings

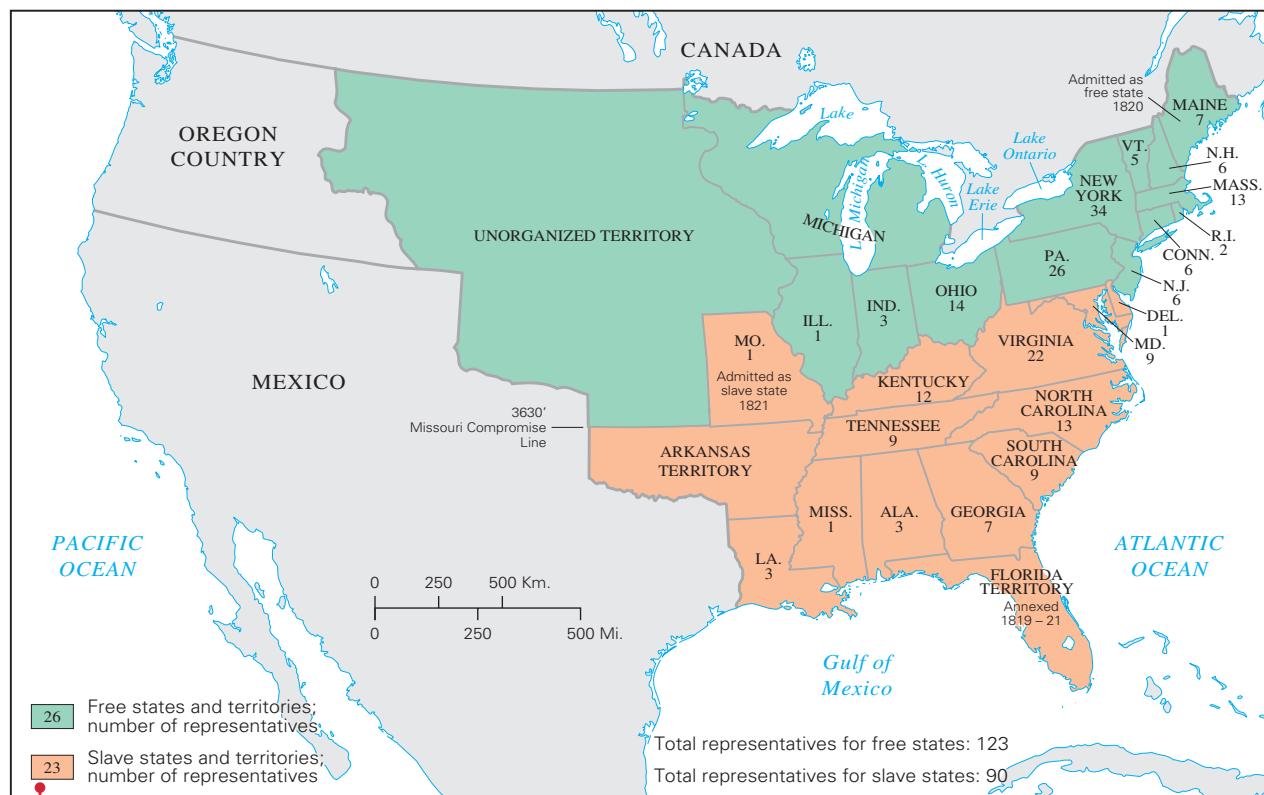
Conducted in the midst of the Missouri crisis, the presidential election of 1820 went as smoothly as could be: Monroe was reelected with the greatest majority ever enjoyed by any president except George Washington. Despite economic

**retaliatory tariff** A tariff on imported goods imposed neither to raise revenue nor control commerce but to retaliate against tariffs charged by another nation.

**bloc** A group of people united for common action.

**Tallmadge Amendment** An amendment to a statehood bill for Missouri proposed by New York congressman James Tallmadge Jr. that would have banned slavery from the new state; it created a deadlock in Congress that necessitated the Missouri Compromise.

**Missouri Compromise** Law proposed by Henry Clay in 1820 admitting Missouri to the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state and banning slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of latitude 36°30'.



**MAP 10.1** Missouri Compromise and Representative Strength

The Missouri Compromise fixed the boundary between free and slave territories at 36°30' north latitude. This map shows the result in both geographical and political terms. Although each section emerged from the compromise with the same number of senators (twenty-four), the balance in the House of Representatives and Electoral College tilted toward the North.

depression and sectional strife, the people's faith in Jefferson's party and his handpicked successors remained firm. As the election of 1824 approached, however, it became clear that the nation's continuing problems had broken Republican unity and destroyed the public's confidence in the party's ability to solve domestic problems.

Approaching the end of his second term, Monroe could identify no more gentleman Republicans from Virginia to carry the presidential torch. Although he probably favored John Quincy Adams as his successor, the president carefully avoided naming him as the party's **standard-bearer**, leaving that task to the Republican congressional caucus. If Monroe was hoping that the party would nominate Adams, he was disappointed when the southern-dominated party caucus tapped Georgia states' rights advocate William Crawford as its candidate. Certainly Clay and Adams were disappointed: each immediately defied party discipline by deciding to run against Crawford without the approval of the caucus. Encouraged by the apparent death of the caucus system for nominating presidential candidates, the Tennessee state legislature chose to put forward its own candidate, Andrew Jackson.

The election that followed was a painful demonstration of how deeply divided the nation had become. Northern regional political leaders rallied behind Adams, southern sectionalists supported Crawford, and northwestern commercial farmers and other backers of the American System lined up behind Clay. But a good portion of the

**standard-bearer** The recognized leader of a movement, organization, or political party.

American people—many of them independent yeoman farmers, traditional craftsmen, and immigrants—defied their political leaders by supporting Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans. Though a political **dark horse**, Jackson won the popular election, but the Electoral College vote was another matter. Jackson had 99 electoral votes to Adams's 84, Crawford's 41, and Clay's 37, but that was not enough to win the election. Jackson's opponents had a combined total of 162 of the 261 electoral votes cast. Thus Jackson won a **plurality** of electors but did not have the “majority of the whole number of electors” required by the Constitution. The Constitution specifies that in such cases, a list of the top three vote getters be passed to the House of Representatives for a final decision.

By the time the House had convened to settle the election, Crawford, the third-highest vote getter, had suffered a disabling stroke, so the list of candidates had only two viable names: John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Because Clay had finished fourth, he was not in contention. As Speaker of the House, however, he was in a particularly strategic position to influence the outcome, and friends of both hopefults sought his support. Adams's and Clay's views on tariffs, manufacturing, foreign affairs, and other key issues were quite compatible. Clay therefore endorsed Adams, who won the House election and in 1825 became the nation's sixth president.

Jackson and his supporters were outraged. They considered Clay a betrayer of western and southern interests, calling him the “Judas of the West.” Then when Adams named Clay as his secretary of state—the position that had been the springboard to the presidency for every past Republican who held it—Jacksonians exploded. Proclaiming Adams's election a “corrupt bargain,” Jackson supporters withdrew from the party of Jefferson, bringing an end to the one-party system that had emerged under the so-called **Virginia Dynasty** and dealing the knockout blow to the Era of Good Feelings.

**dark horse** A political candidate who has little organized support and is not expected to win.

**plurality** The number of votes received by the leading candidate in an election with three or more candidates; the number thus amounts to less than half of the total number of votes cast.

## The “New Man” in Politics

### ★ What factors helped change Americans' political options during the mid-1820s?

### ★ How did the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 reflect those new options?

Since Washington's day the presidency had been considered an office for gentlemen and statesmen. The first several presidents had tried to maintain an air of polite dignity while in office, and voters were generally pleased with that orderly approach. But with the massive social changes taking place after the War of 1812, the conduct of national politics changed drastically. New voters from new occupations with radically varying political and economic views began making demands. Many felt isolated from a political system that permitted the presidency to pass from one propertied gentleman to another. Clearly, changing times called for political change, and the American people began to press for it in no uncertain terms.

John Quincy Adams may have been the best-prepared man ever to assume the office of president. The son of revolutionary giant and former president John Adams, John Quincy had been born and raised in the midst of America's most powerful political circles. By the time of his controversial election in 1825, Adams had been a foreign diplomat, a U.S. senator, a Harvard professor, and an exceptionally effective secretary of state. Adams conducted himself in office as his father had, holding himself above partisan politics and refusing to use political favors to curry support. As a result, Adams had no effective means of rallying those who might have supported him or of pressuring his opponents. Thus, despite his impressive résumé, Adams's administration was a deeply troubled one.

**Virginia Dynasty** Term applied to the U.S. presidents from Virginia in the period between 1801 and 1825: Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe.

Adams's policy commitments did nothing to boost his popularity. The new president promised to increase tariffs to protect American manufacturing and to raise funds necessary to pay for "the improvement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures." He also wanted the Second Bank of the United States to stabilize the economy while providing ample loans to finance new manufacturing ventures. He advocated federal spending to improve "the elegant arts" and advance "literature and the progress of the sciences, ornamental and profound." High sounding though Adams's objectives were, Jefferson spoke for many when he observed that such policies would establish "a single and splendid government of an aristocracy." Jefferson's criticism seemed particularly apt in the economic turmoil that followed the Panic of 1819. Moreover, the increase in federal power required by Adams's policies frightened southerners, and this fear, combined with their traditional distaste for tariffs, virtually unified opposition to Adams in the South.

Under Calhoun's lead, Adams's opponents tried to manipulate tariff legislation to undercut the president's support, proposing an unprecedented increase in tariff rates. The resulting **Tariff of Abominations** certainly undermined Adams's popularity, but it set tariff rates that were unpopular with almost every segment of the population and generated critical sectional tensions.

**Tariff of Abominations** Tariff package designed to win support for anti-Adams forces in Congress; its passage in 1828 discredited Adams but set off sectional tensions.

### Democratic Styles and Political Structure

Adams's demeanor and outlook compounded his problems. He seemed more a man of his father's generation than of his own. The enormous economic and demographic changes that occurred during the first decades of the nineteenth century created a new political climate, one in which Adams's archrival Andrew Jackson felt much more at ease than did the stiff Yankee who occupied the White House.

One of the most profound changes in the American political scene was an explosion in the number of voters. Throughout the early years of the republic's history, voting rights were limited to white men who held real estate. In a nation primarily of farmers, most men owned land, so the fact of limited suffrage raised little controversy. But as economic conditions changed, a smaller proportion of the population owned farms, and although bankers, lawyers, manufacturers, and other such men often were highly educated, economically stable, and politically concerned, their lack of real estate barred them from political participation. Not surprisingly, such elite and middle-class men urged suffrage reform. In 1800 only three of the sixteen states—Kentucky, Vermont, and New Hampshire—had no property qualifications for voting, and Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania permitted white, male taxpayers to vote even if they did not own real property. By 1830, only five of the twenty-four states retained property qualifications, nine required tax payment only, and ten made no property demands at all. In the 1824 election, 356,038 men cast ballots for the presidency. Four years later, more than three times that number of men voted.

**Martin Van Buren** New York politician known for his skillful handling of party politics; he helped found the Democratic Party and later became the eighth president of the United States.

Political opportunists were not slow to take advantage of the new situation. Men such as New Yorker **Martin Van Buren** quickly came to the fore, organizing political factions into tightly disciplined local and statewide units. A longtime opponent of Governor DeWitt Clinton's faction in New York, Van Buren molded disaffected Republicans into the so-called Bucktail faction. In 1820 the Bucktails used a combination of political patronage—the ability of the party in power to distribute government jobs—and fiery speeches to draw newly qualified voters into the political process and swept Clinton out of office.

What was happening in New York was typical of party and antiparty developments throughout the country. As the party of Jefferson dissolved, a tangle of political factions



As suffrage requirements loosened, politics went from being a sedate parlor game among gentlemen to a rough-and-tumble contest that often spilled out into streets of the nation's cities and villages. This painting by George Caleb Bingham captures the colorful spirit of the new politics in depicting a county election in early nineteenth-century Missouri. Francis G. Mayer/CORBIS.

broke out across the nation. This was precisely the sort of petty politics that Adams disdained, but the chaos suited a man like Jackson perfectly. So, while the Adams administration championed policies that few voters favored, Van Buren was busy forging with the hero of New Orleans an alliance that would fundamentally alter American politics.

### The Rise of "King Andrew"

Within two years of Adams's election, Van Buren had brought together northern outsiders like himself, dissident southern Republicans like John C. Calhoun, and western spokesmen like **Thomas Hart Benton** of Missouri and John H. Eaton of Tennessee into a new political party. Calling themselves Democratic-Republicans—**Democrats** for short—this party railed against the neofederalism of Clay's and Adams's National Republican platform. The Democrats called for a return to Jeffersonian simplicity, states' rights, and democratic principles. Behind the scenes, however, they employed the tight organizational discipline and manipulative techniques that Van Buren had used to such good effect against the Clintonians in New York. Lining up behind the recently defeated Andrew Jackson, the new party appealed to both opportunistic political outsiders and democratically inclined new voters. In the congressional elections of 1826, Van Buren's coalition drew the unqualified support of both groups, unseating enough National Republicans to gain a twenty-five-seat majority in the House of Representatives and an eight-seat advantage in the Senate.

Having Andrew Jackson as a candidate was probably as important to the Democrats' success as their ideological appeal and tight political organization. In many ways, Jackson was a perfect reflection of the new voters. Like many of them, he was born in a log cabin under rustic circumstances. His family had faced more than its share of hardships: his father had died two weeks before Andrew's birth, and he had lost his two brothers and his mother during the Revolutionary War. In the waning days of the Revolution, at the age of 13, Jackson joined a mounted militia company and was captured by the British. His captors beat their young prisoner and then let him go, a humiliation he would never forgive.

**Thomas Hart Benton** U.S. senator from Missouri and legislative leader of the Democrats; he was a champion of President Jackson and a supporter of westward expansion.

**Democrats** Political party that brought Andrew Jackson into office; it recalled Jeffersonian principles of limited government and drew its support from farmers, craftsmen, and small businessmen.

**public prosecutor** A lawyer appointed by the government to prosecute criminal actions on behalf of the state.

At the end of the war, Jackson set out to make his own way in the world. Like many of his contemporaries, he chose the legal profession as the route to rapid social and economic advancement. In 1788 he was appointed **public prosecutor** for the North Carolina district that later split off to become Tennessee. Driven by an indomitable will and a wealth of native talent, Jackson became the first U.S. congressman from the state of Tennessee and eventually was elected to the Senate. He also was a judge on the Tennessee Supreme Court. Along the way, Jackson's exploits established his solid reputation as a heroic and natural leader. Even before the War of 1812, his toughness had earned him the moniker "Old Hickory"; because of his humble origins, Jackson was the first president to enjoy a nickname.

Jackson's popular image as a rough-hewn man of the people was somehow unmarred by his political alliance with business interests, his activities as a land speculator, and his large and growing personal fortune and stock of slaves. In the eyes of frontiersmen, small farmers, and to some extent urban workingmen, he remained a common man like them. Having started with nothing, Jackson seemed to have drawn from a combination of will, natural ability, and divine favor to become a man of substance without becoming a snob.

The presidential campaign was dramatic, characterized by all manner of charges and countercharges, but when all was said and done, the Tennessean polled over a hundred thousand more popular votes than did the New Englander and won the vast majority of states, taking every one in the South and West.

As if in response to his supporters' desires and his opponents' fears, Jackson swept into the White House on a groundswell of unruly popular enthusiasm. Ten thousand visitors crammed into the capital to witness Jackson's inauguration on March 4, 1829. Showing his usual disdain for tradition, Jackson took the oath of office and then pushed through the crowd and mounted his horse, galloping off toward the White House followed by a throng of excited onlookers. When they arrived, the mob flowed behind him into the presidential mansion, where they climbed over furniture, broke glassware, and generally frolicked. The new president was finally forced to flee the near-riot by climbing out a back window. Clearly a boisterous new spirit was alive in the nation's politics.

### Launching Jacksonian Politics

**retrenchment** In government, the elimination of unnecessary jobs or functions for reform or cost-cutting purposes.

**spoils** Jobs and other rewards for political support.

That he was a political outsider was a major factor in Jackson's popularity. Many rural voters feared the changes inherent in the market revolution, and Jackson curried their support by promising **retrenchment** and reform in the federal system.

In the process he initiated a personal style in government unlike that of any of his predecessors in office and alienated some voters, both inside and outside Washington.

Retrenchment was first on the new president's agenda. Jackson challenged the notion that government work could be carried out best by an elite core of professional civil servants. Rotation in office gave the president the excuse to fire people whom he associated with the "corrupt bargain" and felt he could not fully trust. It also opened up an unprecedented opportunity for Jackson to reward his loyal supporters by placing them in the newly vacated civil service jobs. The Jacksonian adage became "To the victor belong the **spoils**," and the Democrats made every effort to advance their party's hold on power by distributing government jobs to loyal party members.

Patronage appointments extended to the highest levels in government. Jackson selected cabinet members not for their experience or ability but for their political loyalty and value in satisfying the various factions that formed his coalition. The potential negative impact of these appointments was minimized by Jackson's decision to abandon his

predecessors' practice of regularly seeking his cabinet members' advice on major issues: The president called virtually no cabinet meetings and seldom asked for his cabinet's opinion. Instead, he surrounded himself with an informal network of friends and advisers. This so-called **Kitchen Cabinet** worked closely with the president on matters of both national policy and party management.

Jackson's relationship with everyone in government was equally unconventional. He was known to rage, pout, and storm at suspected disloyalty. Earlier presidents had at least pretended to believe in the equal distribution of power among the three branches of government, but Jackson avowed that the executive should be supreme because the president was the only member of the government elected by all the people. He made it clear that he would stand in opposition to both private and congressional opponents and was not above threatening military action to get his way. Reflecting his generally testy relationship with the legislative branch, he vetoed twelve bills in the course of his administration, three more than all his predecessors combined. Nor did he feel any qualms about standing up to the judiciary. Such arrogant assertions of executive power led Jackson's opponents to call the new president "King Andrew."

**Kitchen Cabinet** President Jackson's informal advisers, who helped him shape both national and Democratic Party policy.

## The Reign of "King Andrew"

- ★ **What was President Jackson's role in shaping U.S. Indian policy? How does his background account for his policy choices?**
- ★ **How did conditions in each region of the country influence the national divisions reflected in the nullification crisis and the Bank War?**

Jackson had promised the voters "retrenchment and reform." He delivered retrenchment, but reform was more difficult to arrange. Jackson tried to implement reform in three broad areas: the nation's banking and financial system, Indian affairs, and the collection of revenue and enforcement of federal law. The steps that Jackson took appealed to some of his supporters but strongly alienated others. Thus, as Jackson tried to follow through on his promise to reform the nation, he nearly tore the nation apart.

### Jackson and the Bank

The Second Bank of the United States, chartered in 1816, was an essential part of Clay's American System. In addition to serving as the depository for federal funds, the Second Bank issued national currency, which could be exchanged directly for gold, and it served as a national clearinghouse for notes issued by state and local banks. In that capacity, the Second Bank could regulate currency values and credit rates and help to control the activities of state banks by refusing to honor their notes if the banks lacked sufficient gold to back them. The Second Bank could also police state and local banks by calling in loans and refusing credit—actions that had helped bring on the Panic of 1819 and had made the Second Bank very unpopular.

In 1823 **Nicholas Biddle** became president of the Second Bank. Biddle, an able administrator and talented economist, enforced firm and consistent policies that restored some confidence in the bank and its functions. But many Americans still were not ready to accept the notion of an all-powerful central banking authority. The vast majority of opponents were Americans who did not understand the function of the Second Bank, viewing it as just another instrument for helping the rich get richer. These critics tended instinctively to support the use of hard currency, called **specie**. Other critics, including

**Nicholas Biddle** President of the Second Bank of the United States; he struggled to keep the bank functioning when President Jackson tried to destroy it.

**specie** Coins minted from precious metals.

many state bankers, opposed the Second Bank because they believed that Biddle's controls were too strict and that they were not receiving their fair share of federal revenues.

Hoping to fan political turmoil in the upcoming presidential election, Jackson's opponents in Congress proposed to renew the bank's twenty-year charter four years early, in 1832. They hoped that Biddle's leadership had established the bank as a necessary part of the nation's economy, even in critics' minds, and that Democratic Party discipline would break down if the president tried to prevent the early renewal of the charter. They were partially right—Congress passed the renewal bill, and Jackson vetoed it—but the anticipated rift between Jackson and congressional Democrats did not open. The president stole the day by delivering a powerful veto message geared to appeal to the mass of Americans on whose support his party's congressmen depended. Jackson denounced the Second Bank as an example of vested privilege and monopoly power that served the interests of urban capitalists while injuring working-class Americans. Although the charter was not renewed, the Second Bank could operate for four more years on the basis of its unexpired charter. Jackson, however, wanted to kill the Second Bank immediately, to “deprive the conspirators of the aid which they expect from its money and power.” The strategy Jackson chose was to withdraw federal funds and redeposit the money in state banks. When his cabinet failed to support the move, Jackson fired several members and appointed Kitchen Cabinet member (and future Supreme Court Chief Justice) Roger B. Taney to head the Treasury Department. Stepping around the law rather than breaking it, Taney chose not to transfer federal funds directly from the Second Bank to state banks, but instead simply kept paying the government's bills from existing accounts in the Second Bank while placing all new deposits in so-called **pet banks**. The full effect of the **Bank War** would not be felt until after the reign of “King Andrew” had ended.

**pet banks** State banks into which Andrew Jackson ordered federal deposits be placed to help deplete the funds of the Second Bank of the United States.

**Bank War** The political conflict that occurred when Andrew Jackson tried to destroy the Second Bank of the United States, which he thought represented special interests at the expense of the common man.

**Five Civilized Tribes** Term used by whites to describe the Cherokee, Choctaw, Seminole, Creek, and Chickasaw Indians, some of whom were planters and merchants.

### Jackson and the Indians

At the end of the War of 1812, the powerful Cherokees, Choctaws, Seminoles, Creeks, and Chickasaws—the so-called **Five Civilized Tribes**—numbered nearly seventy-five thousand people and occupied large holdings within the states of Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Some of these Indians had embraced Jefferson's vision of acculturation but were seen as an obstruction to westward migration, especially by grasping planters on the make who coveted Indian land for cotton fields. A similar situation prevailed in the Northwest. Though neither as numerous nor as Europeanized as the Civilized Tribes, groups such as the Peorias, Kaskaskias, Kickapoos, Sauks, Foxes, and Winnebagos were living settled and stable lives along the northern frontier.

Throughout the 1820s, the federal government tried to convince tribes along the frontier to move farther west. Promised money, new land, and relief from white harassment, many Indian leaders agreed. Others, however, resisted, insisting that they stay where they were. The outcome was terrible factionalism within Indian societies as some lobbied to sell out and move west while others fought to keep their lands. Playing on this factionalism, federal Indian agents were able to extract land cessions that consolidated the eastern tribes onto smaller and smaller holdings. One such transaction, the 1825 Treaty of Indian Springs, involved fraud and manipulation so obnoxious that President Adams overturned the ratified treaty and insisted on a new one.

Adams at least paid lip service to honest dealings with the Indians and the sanctity of treaties. Jackson scoffed at both. In 1817 he had told President Monroe, “I have long viewed treaties with the Indians an absurdity not to be reconciled to the principles of our government.” As president, Jackson advocated removing all the eastern Indians to

# Investigating America

## Jackson's Bank Veto, July 10, 1832

For a politician who professed to believe in small government and states' rights, Jackson was an activist by temperament. When Henry Clay and the elegant Nicholas Biddle—a Monroe appointee whose genteel Philadelphia background was the opposite of Jackson's rough, frontier origins—attempted to turn the Bank into a campaign issue in 1832, Jackson responded as would any provoked southern duelist. "The Bank," he informed Van Buren, "is trying to kill me, but I will kill it." The passage here is from a lengthy veto message of more than eight thousand words, in which Jackson explained his reasons for vetoing recharter.

.....

The present corporate body, denominated the president, directors, and company of the Bank of the United States, will have existed at the time this act is intended to take effect twenty years. It enjoys an exclusive privilege of banking under the authority of the General Government, a monopoly of its favor and support, and, as a necessary consequence, almost a monopoly of the foreign and domestic exchange. The powers, privileges, and favors bestowed upon it in the original charter, by increasing the value of the stock far above its par value, operated as a gratuity of many millions to the stockholders. . . .

If the opinion of the Supreme Court covered the whole ground of this act, it ought not to control the coordinate authorities of this Government. The Congress, the Executive, and the Court must each for itself be guided by its own opinion of the Constitution. Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution swears that he will support it as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others. It is as much the duty of the House of Representatives, of the Senate, and of the President to decide upon the constitutionality of any bill or resolution which may be presented to them for passage or approval as it is of the supreme judges when it may be brought before them for judicial decision. The opinion of the judges has no more authority over Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the judges, and on that point

the west side of the Mississippi, by force if necessary (see Map 10.2). Following Jackson's direction, Congress passed the **Indian Removal Act** in 1830, appropriating the funds necessary to purchase all of the lands held by Indian tribes east of the Mississippi River and to pay for their resettlement in the West.

the President is independent of both. The authority of the Supreme Court must not, therefore, be permitted to control the Congress or the Executive when acting in their legislative capacities, but to have only such influence as the force of their reasoning may deserve. . . .

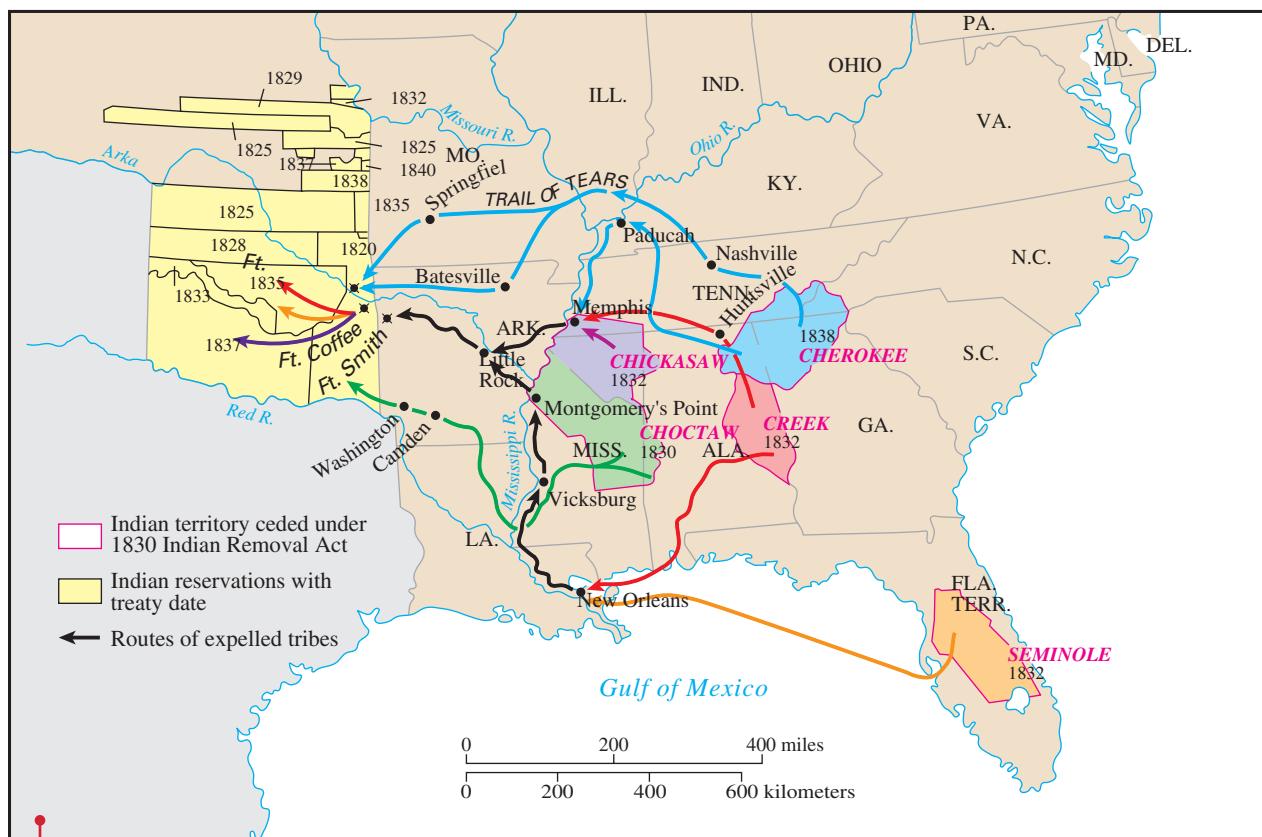
It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing. In the act before me there seems to be a wide and unnecessary departure from these just principles. . . .

- The Supreme Court had previously upheld the constitutionality of the Bank, but as a strict constructionist in the Jeffersonian mold, did Jackson have a point in arguing that each branch of government had a co-equal right to decide such questions?
- Jackson was also the first president to veto legislation on grounds of policy as well as constitutionality. But how might his final statement be read as a political statement, as the 1832 election was only four months away?



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**Indian Removal Act** Law passed by Congress in 1830 providing for the removal of all Indian tribes east of the Mississippi and the purchase of western lands for their resettlement.



**MAP 10.2 Indian Removal**

The outcome of Andrew Jackson's Indian policy appears clearly on this map. Between 1830 and 1835, all of the Civilized Tribes except Osceola's faction of Seminoles were forced to relocate west of the Mississippi River. Thousands died in the process. © Martin Gilbert, The Routledge Atlas of American History, Fourth Edition, ISBN: 0415281512 HB & 0415281520 PB.

**Black Hawk** Sauk leader who brought his people back to their homeland in Illinois; he was captured in 1832 when U.S. troops massacred his followers.

It did not take Jackson long to begin implementing his new authority. When white farmers penetrated Sauk Indian territory during the summer of 1831, the Jackson administration authorized federal troops to forcibly move the entire band of more than a thousand Indian men, women, and children across the Mississippi. During the following spring, however, one Sauk leader, **Black Hawk**, led a party back "home." Harassed by Illinois militia units, Black Hawk's resistance force clung to its territory until federal troops marched in from Illinois and Missouri, killing more than three hundred Indians and capturing Black Hawk.

At the same time, whites were exerting similar pressure on the southern tribes. The case of the Cherokees provides an excellent illustration of the new, more aggressive attitude toward Indian policy. Having allied with Jackson against the Creeks in 1813, the Cherokees emerged from the War of 1812 with their lands pretty well intact, and a rising generation of progressive leaders pushed strongly for the tribe to embrace white culture. In the early 1820s the Cherokees created a formal government with a bicameral legislature, a court system, and a professional, salaried civil service. In 1827 the tribe drafted and ratified a written constitution modeled on the Constitution of the United States. In the following year, the tribe began publication of its own newspaper, the *Cherokee*

*Phoenix*, printed in both English and Cherokee, using the alphabet devised earlier in the decade by tribal member **George Guess (Sequoyah)**.

Those innovations, rather than winning the acceptance of the Cherokees' white neighbors, led to even greater friction. From the frontiersmen's point of view, Indians were supposed to be dying out, disappearing into history, not founding new governments that implied foreign sovereignty and independence. Thus in 1828, the Georgia legislature **annulled** the Cherokee constitution. In the following year, gold was found on Cherokee land. As more than three thousand greedy prospectors violated tribal territory, the state of Georgia extended its authority over the Cherokees and ordered all communal tribal lands seized.

That was the first in a series of laws that the Georgia legislature passed to make life as difficult as possible for the Cherokees in hopes of driving them out of the state. When Christian missionaries living with the tribe protested the state's actions and encouraged the Cherokees to seek federal assistance, Georgia passed a law that required teachers among the Indians to obtain licenses from the state—a law expressly designed to eliminate the missionaries' influence. When two missionaries, Samuel Austin Worcester and Elizur Butler, refused to comply, a company of Georgia militia invaded their mission in the heart of Cherokee country, arrested the teachers, and marched them off to jail.

Two notable lawsuits came out of the combined efforts of the missionaries and Cherokees to get justice. In the first case, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), the Cherokees claimed that Georgia's action in extending authority over them and enforcing state law within Cherokee territory was illegal because they were a sovereign nation in a treaty relationship with the United States. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear this case. Speaking for the Court, Chief Justice John Marshall stated that the Cherokee Nation was neither a foreign nor a domestic state but was a "domestic dependent nation" and as such had no standing in federal court.

As American citizens, however, Worcester and Butler did have legitimate standing under federal law, and in 1832 Marshall was able to render a decision in the case of *Worcester v. Georgia*. In this case, the Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation was a distinct political community recognized by federal authority and that Georgia did not have legitimate power to pass laws regulating Indian behavior or to invade Indian land. He thus declared all the laws Georgia had passed to harass the Cherokees null and void and ordered the state to release Worcester and Butler from jail.

Although the Cherokees had grounds for celebration, their joy was short-lived. As a nationalist, Marshall said nothing about the federal Removal Act of 1830, which meant that the Cherokees won their case but lost the struggle to maintain their lands. When they pressed Jackson on the matter, he claimed that he was powerless to help and that the only way the Indians could get protection from the Georgians was to relocate west of the Mississippi.

Under this sort of pressure, tribal unity broke down. The majority of Cherokees stood fast with their stalwart leader John Ross, fighting Georgia through the court system. But another faction emerged, advocating relocation. Preying on the division, federal Indian agents named the dissenters as the true representatives of the tribe and convinced them to sign the **Treaty of New Echota** (1835), in which the minority faction sold the last 8 million acres of Cherokee land in the East to the U.S. government for \$5 million. In 1838 federal troops rounded up the entire Cherokee tribe and force-marched them to Indian Territory. Like all of the Indians who were forcibly removed from their native lands, the Cherokees suffered terribly. In the course of the long trek, which is known as the **Trail of Tears** (see Map 10.2), nearly a fifth of the twenty thousand Cherokees who started the march died of disease, exhaustion, or heartbreak.

**George Guess (Sequoyah)** Cherokee silversmith and trader who created an alphabet that made it possible to transcribe the Cherokee language according to the sounds of its syllables.

**annul** To declare a law or contract invalid.

#### ***Cherokee Nation v. Georgia***

Supreme Court case (1831) concerning Georgia's annulment of all Cherokee laws; the Supreme Court ruled that Indian tribes did not have the right to appeal to the federal court system.

#### ***Worcester v. Georgia***

Supreme Court case (1832) concerning the arrest of two missionaries to the Cherokees in Georgia; the Court found that Georgia had no right to rule in Cherokee territory.

**Treaty of New Echota** Treaty in 1835 by which a minority faction gave all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi to the U.S. government in return for \$5 million and land in Indian Territory.

**Trail of Tears** Forced march of the Cherokee people from Georgia to Indian Territory in the winter of 1838, during which roughly four thousand Cherokees died.

When white farmers began moving into territory that legally belonged to the Sauk and Fox Indians during the summer of 1831, Jackson's Department of War removed the Indians by force. Black Hawk resisted by moving his band back to their homeland to plant crops in the spring of 1832. Harassed by Illinois militia, the Sauk band attempted to flee back across the Mississippi River but were headed off by federal troops and massacred at the Battle of Bad Axe: The official report noted that at least one hundred fifty Indians were killed and forty, including Black Hawk, were captured. Chicago History Museum.



**Osceola** Seminole leader in Florida who opposed removal to the West and led resistance to U.S. troops; he was captured by treachery while bearing a flag of truce.

The only one of the Civilized Tribes to abandon legal defenses and adopt a policy of military resistance was the Seminoles. Like the other tribes, the Seminoles were deeply divided. Some chose peaceful relocation; others advocated rebellion. After the conciliatory faction signed the Treaty of Payne's Landing in 1832, a group led by **Osceola** broke with the tribe, declaring war on the pro-treaty group and on the United States. After years of guerrilla swamp fighting, Osceola was finally captured in 1837, but the antitreaty warriors fought on. The struggle continued until 1842, when the United States withdrew its troops, having lost fifteen hundred men during the ten-year conflict. Eventually, even the majority of Osceola's followers agreed to move west, though a small faction of the Seminoles remained in Florida's swamps; their descendants sued for peace in 1962.

### The Nullification Crisis

Southern concerns about rising tariffs and growing antislavery activity in the North revealed the South's growing concern about its declining political power during the Jackson administration. For years, southerners had complained that tariffs discriminated against them. From their point of view, they were paying at least as much in tariffs as the North and West but were not getting nearly the same economic benefits.

This matter had come to a head in 1829 when the impact of the ill-considered Tariff of Abominations (1828) began to be felt throughout the nation. The new tariffs roused loud protest from states such as South Carolina, where soil exhaustion and declining prices for agricultural produce were putting strong economic pressure on men who were

# Investigating America

## Calhoun's Defense of Nullification, 1833

After resigning from the vice presidency in 1832 over the nullification crisis, John C. Calhoun was appointed by the South Carolina legislature to fill a vacancy in its U.S. Senate delegation. One year later, in February 1833, Calhoun stood before the Senate defending South Carolina's actions and the principle of nullification. In a brief statement, Calhoun summarized his views and attempted to justify his home state's act of disobedience in refusing to comply with federal laws it regarded as unconstitutional.

The people of Carolina believe that the Union is a union of States, and not of individuals; that it was formed by the States, and that the citizens of the several States were bound to it through the acts of their several States; that each State ratified the Constitution for itself, and that it was only by such ratification of a State that any obligation was imposed upon its citizens. Thus believing, it is the opinion of the people of Carolina that it belongs to the State which has imposed the obligation to declare, in the last resort, the extent of this obligation, as far as her citizens are concerned; and this upon the plain principles which exist in all analogous cases of compact between sovereign bodies. On this principle the people of the State, acting in their sovereign capacity in convention, precisely as they did in the adoption of their own and the Federal Constitution, have declared, by the ordinance, that the acts of Congress which imposed duties under the authority to lay imposts, were acts not for revenue, as intended by the Constitution, but for protection, and therefore null and void. . . . It ought to be borne in mind that, according to the opinion which prevails in Carolina, the right of resistance to the unconstitutional acts of Congress belongs to the State, and not to her individual citizens; and

deeply invested in land and slaves. Calhoun, who took office as Jackson's vice president in 1829, spearheaded the protest.

Though it guarded the author's identity, the South Carolina legislature published Calhoun's *South Carolina Exposition and Protest* in 1828, fanning the flames of sectionalism. Calhoun's **nullification** sentiments reflected notions being expressed throughout the nation. And as Calhoun's pamphlet circulated to wider and wider audiences, nationalists such as Clay and Senator **Daniel Webster** of Massachusetts grew more and more anxious about the potential threat to federal power.

that, though the latter may, in a mere question of *meum* and *tuum*, resist through the courts an unconstitutional encroachment upon their rights, yet the final stand against usurpation rests not with them, but with the State of which they are members; and such act of resistance by a State binds the conscience and allegiance of the citizen. . . .

The Constitution has admitted the jurisdiction of the United States within the limits of the several States only so far as the delegated powers authorize; beyond that they are intruders, and may rightfully be expelled; and that they have been efficiently expelled by the legislation of the State through her civil process, as has been acknowledged on all sides in the debate, is only a confirmation of the truth of the doctrine for which the majority in Carolina have contended.

- What was the significance of Calhoun's assertion that the federal union is a "union of States" and "not of individuals"?
- How did Calhoun's description of the process by which the Constitution was ratified justify his claims concerning the rights of a statewide convention to declare federal laws null and void?
- The expression "*meum* and *tuum*" is Latin for "mine and thine." Here Calhoun argued that a citizen's claim that the government has wrongly taken his or her property—a conflict between "*meum* and *tuum*"—would be an appropriate matter to take to court. In cases, however, where *all* citizens believe themselves deprived by the government, it falls to the state and not to the courts to act on their behalf. On what basis did Calhoun justify the expulsion of federal authorities from a state? What assumptions was he making about federal rights versus states' rights?



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**nullification** Refusal by a state to recognize or enforce a federal law within its boundaries.

**Daniel Webster** Massachusetts senator and lawyer who was known for his forceful speeches and considered nullification a threat to the Union.

In 1832 nullification advocates in South Carolina called for a special session of the state legislature to consider the matter of state versus federal power. The convention met in November and voted overwhelmingly to nullify the despised tariff. The legislature also elected nullification's most prominent spokesman, Robert Y. Hayne, as governor and named Calhoun as his replacement in the Senate. The vice president, who realized that he would not be Jackson's running mate in the coming election, finally admitted writing the *Exposition and Protest* and resigned from the vice presidency to lead the pro-nullification forces from the Senate floor. The issue was ostensibly about the tariff, but Jackson correctly suspected that "the Negro question" and a desire to nullify any law that hindered the planters' right to own slaves lurked behind nullification.

Although Jackson was a states' rights supporter, he was also a soldier who had risked his life for the nation, and he believed that nullification violated the Constitution and was "destructive of the great object for which it was formed." The president immediately reinforced federal forts in South Carolina and sent warships to guarantee the tariff's collection. He also asked Congress to pass a "force bill" to reaffirm his power to invade the rebellious state if doing so proved necessary to carry out federal law. In hopes of placating southerners and winning popular support in the upcoming election, Congress passed a lowered tariff, but it also voted to give Jackson the power he requested.

South Carolina nullifiers immediately called a new convention, which withdrew its nullification of the previous tariff but passed a resolution nullifying the force bill. Because Jackson no longer needed the force bill to apply federal law and collect the new tariff, he chose to ignore this pointless act of bravado. Thus there was no real resolution to the problem, and the gash over federal versus states' rights remained unhealed. The wound continued to fester until it was finally cauterized thirty years later by civil war.

## Summary

With the end of the War of 1812, President Madison and the Republicans promoted a strong agenda for the nation. Joining with former critics such as Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, Madison pushed for a national market economy by sponsoring federal legislation for a national bank, controlled currency, and tariff protection for American industry. In addition, Madison gave free rein to nationalists such as John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, who succeeded in enhancing the nation's military reputation and expanding its sphere of influence.

While the nation moved forward in accomplishing its diplomatic goals, the Republicans' economic agenda suffered from a lack of viable transportation and communication systems. Expecting quick and enormous profits, New York built the Erie Canal, the first successful link between the increasingly urban and manufacturing East and the rural, agricultural West. Convinced finally that transportation improvements were necessary for national

defense and for carrying out the work of the government, Madison and his successors joined with state officials to begin the process of building a truly national system of roads and canals.

But what had begun as an age of optimism closed in a tangle of conflict and ill will. A much-hoped-for prosperity dissolved in the face of shrinking markets, resulting in economic panic in 1819 and a collapse in the speculative economy. Economic hard times, in turn, triggered increased competition between the nation's geographical sections, as leaders wrestled for control over federal power in an effort to rid particular areas of economic despair. Supporters of the American System tried to craft a solution, but their compromise did not entirely satisfy anyone. And in the sea of contention that swelled around the Missouri Compromise, the Era of Good Feelings collapsed.

Distressed by what seemed an elite conspiracy to run American affairs, newly politicized voters rejected the big

government policies of John Quincy Adams in favor of military hero Andrew Jackson, who promised a return to Jeffersonian principles. Backed by a political machine composed of northern, western, and southern interests, Jackson had to juggle each region's financial, tariff, and

Indian policy demands while trying to hold his political alliance and the nation together. The outcome was a series of regional crises—the Bank War, nullification, and Indian removal—that alienated each region and together constituted a crisis of national proportions.

## Key Terms

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protective tariffs, p. 224  
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# CHAPTER II

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### ***The New Cotton Empire in the South***

A New Birth for the Plantation System

Life Among Common Southern Whites

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA:**

Jacob Stroyer Remembers the Slave Trade, 1850s

Free Blacks in the South

Living Conditions for Southern Slaves

### ***The Manufacturing Empire in the Northeast***

The "American System of Manufacturing"

New Workplaces and New Workers

#### **IT MATTERS TODAY: Manufacturing and the Revolution in Time**

Living Conditions in Blue-Collar America

Life and Culture Among a New Middle Class

Social Life for a Genteel Class

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA: The Press and Helen Jewett, 1836**

### ***A New Empire of the West***

Moving Westward

Pioneer Life in the New Country

The Hispanic Southwest

The Mormon Community

Tying the West to the Nation

## **Summary**

# The Great Transformation: Growth and Expansion 1828–1848

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Helen Jewett**

The story of Helen Jewett's fateful choice begins with a little girl named Dorcas Doyen, the daughter of a poor Maine shoemaker. Her mother died when she was 10 years old, and her father hired her out as a domestic servant. Dorcas eventually became a maid in the household of a prominent judge. She was encouraged to better herself and succeeded so well that visitors often mistook her for one of the judge's own daughters.

But she was not one of the judge's daughters. Rapidly approaching womanhood, Dorcas faced the unpleasant reality that as long as she remained in the relatively closed, face-to-face village world of rural Maine, she could never be anything more than a serving girl. At age 17 she chose to assume a new name and moved to Portland, where her beauty and wit soon made her a much-sought-after companion by upwardly mobile young men. Though no one in polite society at the time used such an expression, she became a high-class call girl; so successful that she decided to break into the big time by moving to New York City.

Adopting the name Helen Jewett, she took up residence in one of the most fashionable brothels. There she entertained a following of educated, economically comfortable young clerks who were putting off marriage while launching their careers. "Soiled" and yet still genteel, she slipped through the cracks of social convention, living out a polite existence despite her fallen condition. She probably would have continued this successful life if horror had not intervened. On the night of April 10, 1836, Jewett was hacked to death with an ax and then set on fire. The sparkling quality of her life and the gruesome nature of her death made her murder an overnight media sensation—newspapers scrambled for the latest tidbits about the death, and life, of this conventionally contradictory young woman. Her story revealed not only the risks but also the expanding range of choices that were coming into being. Free to invent new identities for themselves, a new generation of Americans slipped loose from the traditional constraints of village life to choose where and how they wanted to live in a new and urbanizing America.

#### **HELEN JEWETT**

With natural beauty and a quick mind, Helen Jewett became a very successful prostitute in New York City. Although she had no valid claim to genteel status, she passed herself off as the dishonored daughter of an elite family. Helen Jewett's grisly murder was used as a moral lesson illustrating the costs that might accompany sneaking through social barriers.

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.



# Chronology

<b>1821</b>	William Becknell opens Santa Fe Trail to American traders	<b>1836</b>	Samuel F. B. Morse invents electric telegraph
<b>1822</b>	John H. Hall perfects interchangeable parts for gun manufacturing		Bronson Alcott's <i>Conversations with Children on the Gospels</i>
<b>1828</b>	Baltimore and Ohio Railroad commissioned		Murder of Helen Jewett
<b>1830</b>	Steam locomotive <i>Tom Thumb</i> beaten in race by stagecoach horse Church of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) founded in New York	<b>1838</b>	National Road completed to Vandalia, Illinois First mass-produced brass clock
<b>1830–1840</b>	Ten-year immigration figure for United States exceeds 500,000	<b>1839</b>	First transatlantic steamship race John Sutter founds New Helvetia
<b>1833</b>	Ohio Canal completed	<b>1841</b>	Mormons build Nauvoo, Illinois
<b>1834</b>	Mexican government begins seizing California missions Abolition of slavery in British Empire	<b>1844</b>	Congress passes preemption bill Murder of Joseph Smith
<b>1835</b>	Number of U.S. periodicals exceeds 1,250, with combined circulation of 90 million	<b>1847</b>	Mormons arrive in Utah
		<b>1848</b>	Gold discovered in California Revolutions rock Europe; <i>Communist Manifesto</i> published

Helen Jewett might be considered an exceptional woman in any era, but all the more so in the early nineteenth century. At a time when expectations for women increasingly constrained their public roles—confining them, at least ideally, to positions as mothers, teachers, and churchgoers at the high end of the social spectrum or factory workers or domestic servants at the lower end—her decision to become a prostitute certainly stands out. But in a way, her experience typifies much broader patterns in American life during this period. Like many in her generation, Helen fled the countryside to follow the economic opportunities that were concentrating in the newly arising cities. And like so many of her contemporaries, her success in her career was itself a product of changing times: the anonymity that came with the rise of cities permitted prostitution to thrive. At the same time, the worsening conditions for working people certainly provided an incentive for young Dorcas Doyen to create a false identity for herself that would allow her to transcend her lowly origins. She came to the city to make something new and better of herself—transforming herself in line with the great transformation happening around her.

But the urbanization that was taking place in the northeastern section of the country was only one manifestation of the upheaval that was affecting the nation. As cotton production continued to offer staggering profits for southern planters, that industry and its various features—especially slavery—underwent significant growth and change. That in turn affected the everyday lives of everyone, of every race, in the ever-expanding Cotton Belt. Another alternative was to move west. This era saw an explosion in westward expansion as hopeful cotton capitalists and independent farmers sought new opportunities in both the Northwest and Southwest.

## The New Cotton Empire in the South

★ **Why did living conditions for southerners—black and white—change after 1820?**

★ **How did elite white southerners respond to the change? What were the impacts of their response on slaves, free blacks, and poor whites?**

The South exploded outward, seeking new lands on which to grow the glamour crop of the century: cotton. In 1820 cotton was being grown heavily in parts of Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. Within a matter of decades, the cotton empire had expanded to include most of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and extensive portions of eastern Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and southern Missouri. The new dependence on a single crop changed the outlook and experiences not just of large planters but also of the slaves, free blacks, and poor whites whose labor made cotton king.

### A New Birth for the Plantation System

**antebellum** The decades before the Civil War, the period from 1815 to 1860; Latin for “before the war.”

**Cotton Belt** The region in the southeastern United States in which cotton is grown.

**paternalistic** Treating social dependents as a father treats his children, providing for their needs but denying them rights or responsibilities.

Few images have persisted in American history longer than that of the “typical” courtly southern planters in the years before the Civil War. Often characterized as the conservators of an older, stately way of life, the cotton barons of the **antebellum** South were really a new sort of men who carved out a new sort of existence. These new aristocrats were generally not related to the old colonial plantation gentry, but had begun their careers as land speculators, financiers, and rough-and-tumble yeoman farmers who had capitalized on both ruthlessness and lucky speculations in the burgeoning cotton market to amass large landholdings and armies of slaves.

And they were far from typical. First, the total number of slaveholders constituted less than one-third of all white southerners. Of the minority who actually owned slaves, nearly three-quarters owned only 80 to 160 acres of land and fewer than ten slaves; another 15 percent owned up to 800 acres and between ten and twenty slaves, leaving only about 12 percent who possessed more than 800 acres and twenty or more slaves. The planter class, though few in number, controlled the biggest share of productive land and labor. As a result, their economic, political, and social importance was far out of proportion to their numbers.

Although they often complained of debt and poor markets, it appears that large-scale planters could expect an annual return on capital equivalent to what the most successful northern industrialists were making. Agricultural profits in non-cotton-producing areas were significantly lower, but even there slavery netted white landowners major profits. The enormous demand for workers in the heart of the **Cotton Belt** created a profitable interstate trade in slaves, especially after Congress outlawed the importation of slaves from abroad in 1808. As cotton cultivation exploded westward, tobacco and wheat planters from the Chesapeake region sold their surplus workers to the fresh lands of the frontier South. Perhaps as many as one million enslaved Americans were resold in the decades before the Civil War, breaking up families and deeply rooted social connections. This fragmentation of slave society helped to further dehumanize an already dehumanizing institution and drove a deeper wedge between the races.

The enormous profits earned from cotton in the 1840s and 1850s permitted some planter families to build elegant mansions and to affect the lifestyle that they associated with a noble past. Voracious readers of romantic literature, planters assumed “courtly” manners and adopted the nobleman’s **paternalistic** obligation to look out for the welfare of social inferiors, both black and white. Women decked out in the latest gowns flocked to balls and picnics. Young men went to academies to learn the twin aristocratic virtues of militarism and honor. Young women attended private “seminaries” where they

were taught, in the words of one southern seminary mistress, “principles calculated to render them useful and rational companions.” Courtship became highly ritualized, an imitation of imagined medieval court manners.

Often, though, planters who purchased slaves and fields on credit genuinely feared that their carefully constructed empires and lifestyles might collapse in an instant. Aristocratic parents sought to use marriage to add to family and economic security. “As to my having any sweethearts that is not thought of,” one young southern woman complained. “Money is too much preferred, for us poor Girls to be much caressed.”

Even those girls whose fortunes earned caresses faced a strange and often difficult life. Far from being frail, helpless creatures, southern plantation mistresses carried a heavy burden of responsibility. A planter’s wife was responsible for all domestic matters. She supervised large staffs of slaves, looked out for the health of everyone, and managed all plantation operations in her husband’s absence. All those duties were complicated by a gender code that relegated southern women to a peculiar position in the plantation hierarchy—between white men and black slaves. On the one hand, southern white women were expected to exercise absolute authority over their slaves. On the other, they were to be absolutely obedient to white men. “He is master of the house,” said plantation mistress Mary Boykin Chesnut about her husband. “To hear [him] is to obey.” This contradiction added severe anxiety to southern women’s other burdens. And like Thomas Jefferson before them, antebellum planters found that their power over slave women afforded them sexual as well as financial benefits, a fact that produced even more stress for plantation mistresses who, constrained as they were by the region’s strict rules of conduct, generally were powerless to intercede. Though some may not have minded release from sexual pressures, they had to be mindful of slave concubines and their children, both of whom occupied an odd place in the domestic power structure. It is little wonder, then, that Chesnut concluded her observations about southern womanhood with the statement, “There is no slave...like a wife.”

### Life Among Common Southern Whites

As noted, fully two-thirds of free southern families owned no slaves. A small number of these families owned stores, craft shops, and other urban businesses in Charleston, New Orleans, Atlanta, and other southern cities. Some were attorneys, teachers, doctors, and other professionals. The great majority, however, were proud small farmers who owned, leased, or simply squatted on the land they farmed.

Commonly tarred with the label “poor white trash” by their planter neighbors, these people were often productive stock raisers and farmers. They concentrated on growing and manufacturing by hand what they needed to live, but all aspired to end up with small surpluses of grains, meat products, and other commodities that they could sell either to neighboring plantations or to merchants for export. Many of these small farmers tried to grow cotton in an effort to raise cash, though they generally could not do so on a large scale. Whatever cash they raised they usually spent on necessary manufactures, as well as on land and slaves.

These small farmers had a shaky relationship with white planters. On the one hand, many hoped to join the ranks of the great planters by transforming their small holdings into cotton empires. On the other hand, they resented the planters’ exalted status and power. They also feared the expansion of large plantations, which often forced small holders to abandon their hard-won farms and slaves.

Large-scale planters used racial tensions as a device for controlling their contentious neighbors. They might take slave concubines or trust African Americans with positions

# Investigating America

## Jacob Stroyer Remembers the Slave Trade, 1850s

One of the ironies of American independence is that the end of British rule helped lead to the closing of the U.S. international slave trade in 1808, but that led to the emergence of an extensive domestic trade between the older slave states of the Chesapeake and the new territories of Mississippi and Alabama. As cotton cultivation pushed west, growers on the frontier required labor to clear the fresh land and plant the crops. Over the next decades, African Americans sold *within* the country numbered approximately twice as many as Africans who had been sold into what became the United States.

Jacob Stroyer was a slave on a rice plantation in South Carolina until he was liberated during the Civil War. After freedom, he became the minister of an African Methodist Episcopal congregation, and in 1879 he published his memoirs, *My Life in the South*. In this passage, he described the sale of Carolina slaves into the western frontier.

.....

**W**hen the day came for them to leave, some, who seemed to have been willing to go at first, refused, and were handcuffed together and guarded on their way to the cars by white men. The women and children were driven to the depot in crowds, like so many cattle, and the sight of them caused great excitement among master's negroes. Imagine a mass of uneducated people shedding tears and yelling at the tops of their voices in anguish and grief.

The victims were to take the cars from a station called Clarkson turnout, which was about four miles from master's place. The excitement was so great that the overseer and driver could not control the relatives and friends of those that were going away, as a large crowd of both old and young went down to the depot to see them off. Louisiana was considered by the slaves as a place of slaughter, so those who were going did not expect to see their friends again. While passing along,

many of the negroes left their masters' fields and joined us as we marched to the cars; some were yelling and wringing their hands, while others were singing little hymns that they were accustomed to for the consolation of those that were going away....

While the cars were at the depot, a large crowd of white people gathered, and were laughing and talking about the prospect of negro traffic; but when the cars began to start and the conductor cried out, "all who are going on this train must get on board without delay," the colored people cried out with one voice as though the heavens and earth were coming together, and it was so pitiful, that those hard hearted white men who had been accustomed to driving slaves all their lives, shed tears like children. As the cars moved away we heard the weeping and wailing from the slaves as far as human voice could be heard; and from that time to the present I have neither seen nor heard from my two sisters, nor any of those who left Clarkson depot on that memorable day.

.....

- Slaveholders defended their system on the grounds that their paternalistic obligation benefited their plantation family—black as well as white. To what extent did the sale of their black "wards" suggest that their talk was a romantic pose meant to quiet northern criticism?
- Professional slave buyers were a specialized group, and they paid hard cash for the young men and women they purchased for resale in New Orleans. Since most planters existed from season to season on credit, why would the lure of specie prove a terrible temptation?
- Given that most southern whites did not own slaves, what does Stroyer's description of white people at the depot suggest about the complicity of nonslaveholding whites in the system?



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of authority on plantations, but the white elite steadfastly emphasized white supremacy when conversing with their poorer neighbors. They acknowledged that poor farmers felt underprivileged when compared with planters, but stressed that slavery spared them from the most demeaning work. Poor whites enjoyed the freedoms and privileges they had, planters asserted, only because of slavery; should slavery ever end, planters avowed, it would be the farmers who would have the most to lose.

### Free Blacks in the South

Caught in the middle between southern planters, slaves, and poor white farmers, African Americans in the South who were not slaves often faced extreme discrimination. Some communities of free blacks could trace their origins back to earliest colonial times, when Africans, like Europeans, served limited terms of indenture. The majority, however, had been freed recently because of diminishing plantation profits during the late 1700s. Most of these people lived not much differently from slaves, working for white employers as day laborers.

Mounting restrictions on free blacks during the first half of the nineteenth century limited their freedom of movement, economic options, and the protection they could expect to receive by law. In the town of Petersburg, Virginia, for example, when a free black woman named Esther Fells irritated her white male neighbor, he took it upon himself to whip her for disturbing his peace. The sheriff did not arrest the assailant but instead took Mrs. Fells into custody, and the court ordered that she be given fifteen more lashes for “being insolent to a white person.” Skin color left free African Americans open to abuses and forced them to be extremely careful in their dealings with their white neighbors.

Still, some opportunities were available for a handful of free blacks who had desirable skills. In the Upper South—Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—master craftsmen hired young African American boys as apprentices, and those who could stick out their apprenticeship might eventually make an independent living. The situation was different for African American girls. They had few opportunities as skilled laborers. Some became seamstresses and washers, others became cooks, and a few grew up to run small groceries, taverns, and restaurants. Folk healing, **midwifery**, and prostitution also led to economic independence for some black women.

### Living Conditions for Southern Slaves

A delicate balance between power and profit shaped planters’ policies toward slaves and set the tone for slave life. Maintaining profitability prompted slaveowners to enforce severe discipline and exercise careful supervision over slaves, leading southern states to write increasingly harsh **slave codes** during the early nineteenth century, giving slave owners virtual life-and-death control over their human chattels. But slaves were expensive: damaging or, worse, killing a healthy slave meant taking a significant financial loss. Still, given the need to keep up productivity, slaveowners were not shy about using measured force. “I always punish according to the crime,” one plantation owner declared. “If it is a Large one I give him a genteel flogging with a strop, about 75 Lashes I think is a good whipping.” Noting the practical limitations even to this “gentle” form of discipline, he continued, “When picking cotton I never put on more than 20 stripes and very frequently not more than 10 or 15.” But not all plantation owners were gentle or even practical when it came to discipline. The historical record is filled with accounts of slaveowners who were willing to take a financial loss by beating slaves until they became useless or even died.

In keeping with demands for profitability, housing for slaves was seldom more than adequate. Generally, slaves lived in one-room log cabins with dirt floors and a fireplace or stove. Mindful of the need to maintain control and keep slaves productive, slaveowners tried to avoid crowding people into slave quarters. As one slaveowner explained, “The crowding [of] a number into one house is unhealthy. It breeds contention; is destructive of delicacy of feeling, and it promotes immorality between the sexes.” Though not all planters shared this view, census figures suggest that the average slave cabin housed

**midwifery** The practice of assisting women in childbirth.

**slave codes** Laws that established the status of slaves, denying them basic rights and classifying them as the property of slave owners.

This early photograph, taken on a South Carolina plantation before the Civil War, freezes slave life in time, giving us a view of what slave cabins looked like, how they were arranged, how the largest majority of slaves dressed, and how they spent what little leisure time they had. Collection of William Gladstone.



**cholera** An infectious disease of the small intestines whose bacteria is often found in untreated water.

five or six people. Because of the lack of proper sanitation, however, slaves often suffered from dysentery and **cholera**.

As in the cabin homes of common southern whites, furnishings in slave houses were usually fairly crude and often were crafted by the residents themselves. Bedding generally consisted of straw pallets stacked on the floor or occasionally mounted on rough bedsteads. Other furnishings were equally simple—rough-hewn wooden chairs or benches and plank tables.

Clothing was very basic. One Georgia planter outlined the usual yearly clothing allowance for slaves: “The proper and usual quantity of clothes for plantation hands is two suits of cotton for spring and summer, and two suits of woolen for winter; four pair of shoes and three hats.” Women generally wore simple dresses or skirts and blouses, while children often went naked in the summer and were fitted with long, loose hanging shirts during the colder months.

It appears that the slave diet, like slave clothing and housing, was sufficient to maintain life but not particularly pleasing. One slave noted that there was “plenty to eat sich as it was,” but in summer flies swarmed all over the food. Her master, she said, would laugh about that, saying the added nutrition provided by the flies “made us fat.” Despite justified complaints, the fact is that the average slave diet was rich by comparison with the diet of many other Americans. Slaves in the American South ate significantly more meat than did workers in the urban North. In addition to meat, slaves consumed milk

and corn, potatoes, peas and beans, molasses, and fish. Generally, the planter provided this variety of food, but owners also occasionally permitted slaves to hunt and fish and to collect wild roots, berries, and vegetables.

The slave diet, however, was responsible for a significant health issue. Recent research reveals that slave children were generally undernourished because slaveowners would not allocate ample resources to feed people who did not work. Once children were old enough to work, however, they had access to a very high-calorie diet. Such early malnutrition followed by an instant transition to a high-calorie and often high-fat diet may well have led to the high incidence of heart attacks, strokes, and similar ailments among slaves found in the historical record. And given the balance-sheet mentality among plantation owners, this phenomenon may not have been unwelcome. Old people who could not work hard were, like children, a liability; thus having slaves die from circulatory disease in middle age saved planters from unnecessary expenditures later on.

As to the work itself, cotton planting led to increasing concentration in the tasks performed by slaves. A survey of large and medium-size plantations during the height of the cotton boom shows that the majority of slaves (58 percent of the men and 69 percent of the women) were employed primarily as **field hands**. Of the rest, only 2 percent of slave men and 17 percent of slave women were employed as **house slaves**. The remaining 14 percent of slave women were employed in nonfield occupations such as sewing, weaving, and food processing. Seventeen percent of slave men were employed in nonfield activities such as driving wagons, piloting riverboats, and herding cattle. Another 23 percent were managers and craftsmen.

The percentage of slave craftsmen was much higher in cities, where slave **artisans** were often allowed to hire themselves out on the open job market in return for handing part of their earnings over to their owners. In Charleston, Norfolk, Richmond, and Savannah, slave artisans formed guilds. Feeling threatened by their solidarity, white craftsmen appealed to state legislatures and city councils for restrictions on slave employment in skilled crafts. Such appeals, and the need for more and more field hands, led to a decline in the number of slave artisans during the 1840s and 1850s.

**field hands** People who do agricultural work such as planting, weeding, and harvesting.

**house slaves** People who did domestic work such as cleaning and cooking.

**artisans** People whose primary employment is the specialized production of hand-manufactured items; craftspeople.

## The Manufacturing Empire in the Northeast

- ★ **How did the process of manufacturing change in the United States after 1820? How did this change affect the nature of work?**
- ★ **How did the developing factory system affect the lives of artisans, factory owners, and middle-class Americans?**

Although the South changed radically during the opening years of the nineteenth century, one thing persisted: the economy remained rooted in people's homes. Before the 1820s, households in the North also produced most of the things they used. For example, more than 60 percent of the clothing that Americans wore was spun from raw fibers and sewn by women in their own homes. Some householders even crafted sophisticated items—furniture, clocks, and tools—but skilled artisans usually made such products. These craftsmen, too, usually worked in their homes, assisted by family members and an extended family of artisan employees: **apprentices** and **journeymen**.

Beginning with the cotton-spinning plants that sprang up during the War of 1812, textile manufacturing led the way in pushing production in a radical new direction. From 1820 onward, manufacturing increasingly moved out of the home and into factories, and

**apprentices** People bound by contract to a craftsman, providing labor in exchange for learning the skills associated with the craft.

**journeymen** People who have finished an apprenticeship in a trade or craft and are qualified workers in the employ of another.

cities began to grow up around the factories. The intimate ties between manufacturers and workers were severed, and both found themselves surrounded by strangers in the new urban environments. “In most large cities there may be said to be two nations, understanding as little of one another, having as little intercourse, as if they lived in different lands,” sighed Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing in 1841.

### The “American System of Manufacturing”

**putting-out system** Manufacturing system through which machine-made components were distributed to individual families who used them to craft finished goods.

The transition from home manufacturing to factory production did not take place overnight, and the two processes often overlapped. Pioneer manufacturers such as Samuel Slater relied on home workers to carry out major steps in the production of textiles. Using what was called the **putting-out system**, cotton spinners supplied machine-produced yarn to individual households, where families then wove fabric on their own looms during their spare time. Such activities provided much-needed cash to farm families, enabled less-productive family members (like the elderly or children) to contribute, and gave entire families worthwhile pastimes during lulls in the farming calendar.

But innovations in manufacturing soon began displacing such home crafting. The factory designs pioneered by Francis Cabot Lowell and his various partners were widely copied during the 1820s and 1830s. Spinning and weaving on machines located in one building significantly cut both the time and the cost of manufacturing. Quality control became easier because the tools of the trade, owned by the manufacturer rather than by the worker, were standardized and employees were under constant supervision. As a result, the putting-out system for turning yarn into cloth went into serious decline, falling off by as much as 90 percent in some areas of New England. Even home production of clothes for family use slid into decline. Women discovered that spending their time producing cheese or eggs or other marketable items could bring in enough cash to purchase clothing and still have money left over. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, ready-made clothing—often cut, machine-sewn, and finished by semiskilled workers in factory settings—became standard wearing apparel.

A major technological revolution helped to push factory production into other areas of manufacturing as well during these years. In traditional manufacturing, individual artisans crafted each item one at a time, from the smallest part to the final product. A clock maker, for example, either cast or carved individually by hand all of the clock’s internal parts. As a result, the mechanisms of a clock worked together only in the clock for which they had been made. If that clock ever needed repair, new parts had to be custom-made for it. The lack of **interchangeable parts** made manufacturing extremely slow and repairs difficult, and it limited employment in the manufacturing trades to highly skilled professionals.

After many failed experiments, in 1822 American gun-maker John H. Hall brought together the necessary skill, financing, and tools to prove that manufacturing guns from interchangeable parts was practical. Within twenty years this “American system of manufacturing,” as it was called, was being used to produce a wide range of products—farm implements, padlocks, sewing machines, and clocks. Formerly, clocks had been a status symbol setting apart people of means from common folks; however, using standardized parts, pioneer manufacturers like Seth Thomas and Chauncey Jerome revolutionized clock making to the point where virtually all Americans could afford a clock.

**interchangeable parts** Parts that are identical and can be substituted for one another.

**company town** A town built and owned by a single company; its residents depend on the company for jobs, stores, schools, and housing.

### New Workplaces and New Workers

At first, owners found they had to use creative means to attract workers into the new factories. Some entrepreneurs developed **company towns**. In New England these towns resembled traditional New England villages. Families recruited



# It Matters Today

## MANUFACTURING AND THE REVOLUTION IN TIME

In 1838, Chauncey Jerome introduced the first mass-produced brass clock at a price that virtually any American could afford. The distribution of clocks and the means by which Jerome produced them reinforced each other. Factory production required that workers, clerks, managers, shippers, and others essential to industry be coordinated if factories were to function effectively. All of these employees, from the highest to the lowest in status, needed to have a reliable way of telling time. Jerome's clocks provided that reliability, contributing to a revolution in the way Americans began thinking about time itself. Time management, a concept that would have been foreign to a previous generation of Americans, had now become a reality. We now are almost

entirely dependent on day planners or electronic personal information managers to keep track of time, a heritage of the revolution in timekeeping that was born in 1838 with the introduction of cheap brass clocks.

- How were the lives of Americans in the early nineteenth century changed by the increased regimentation that accompanied the manufacturing revolution? In what ways does your life reflect these changes that took place so long ago?
- Try to imagine experiencing one day without referring to any sort of mechanical or electronic time management device. Describe what your day would be like.

from the economically depressed countryside were installed in neat row houses, each with its own small vegetable garden. The company employed each family member. Women worked on the production line. Men ran heavy machinery and worked as **millwrights**, carpenters, haulers, or as day laborers dredging out the **millraces**. Children did light work in the factories and tended gardens at home.

Lowell's company developed another system at its factories. Hard-pressed to find enough families to leave traditional employment and come to work in the factories, Lowell recruited unmarried farm girls. The company built dormitories to house these young working women, offering cash wages and reasonable prices for room and board, as well as cultural events and educational opportunities. Because most of the girls saw factory work as a transitional stage between girlhood and marriage, Lowell assured them and their families that the company would strictly control the moral atmosphere so that the girls' reputations would remain spotless.

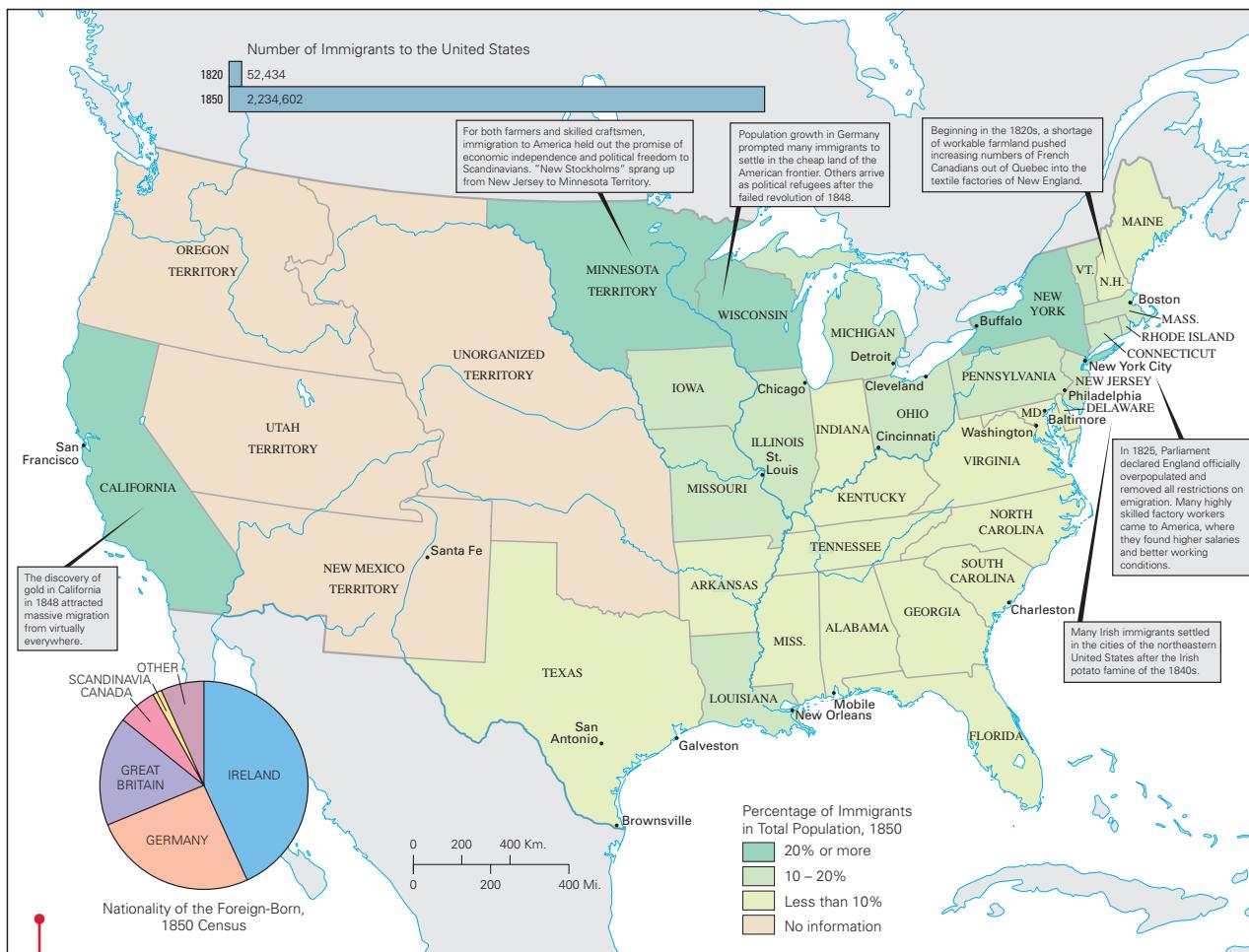
More broadly, however, a growing pool of labor combined with machine production to produce economic devastation for workers. No longer was the employer a master craftsman who felt some responsibility to look out for his workers' domestic needs. Factory owners were obligated to investors and bankers and had to squeeze the greatest possible profit out of the manufacturing process. As the swelling supply of labor allowed employers to offer lower and lower wages, increasing numbers of working people faced poverty and squalor.

Immigration supplied much of this labor. Between 1820 and 1830 slightly more than 151,000 people immigrated to the United States. In the decade that followed, that number increased to nearly 600,000; between 1840 and 1850, well over a million and a half people moved to the United States from abroad (see Map 11.1). This enormous increase in immigration changed not only the **demographic** but also the cultural and economic face of the nation. The flood of immigrants collected in the port and manufacturing cities of the Northeast, where they joined Americans leaving the countryside. Adding to the resulting brew were former master craftsmen, journeymen, and apprentices who no

**millwright** A person who designs, builds, or repairs mills or mill machinery.

**millrace** The channel for the fast-moving stream of water that drives a mill wheel.

**demographic** The statistical distribution of subpopulations (ethnic groups, for example) among the larger population of a community or nation.



**MAP II.1** Origin and Settlement of Immigrants, 1820–1850

Immigration was one of the most important economic, political, and social factors in American life during the antebellum period. As this map shows, with the exception of Louisiana, immigration was confined almost exclusively to areas where slavery was not permitted. This gave the North, Northwest, and California a different cultural flavor from the rest of the country and also affected the political balance between those areas and the South.

longer had a secure place in the changing economy. Together, but seldom cooperatively, these groups helped to form a new social class in America.

Nearly half of all the immigrants who flooded into the United States between 1820 and 1860 came from Ireland—a nation beset with poverty, political strife, and starvation. Because of land tenancy laws imposed by the British government in Ireland, by the early 1840s poverty was so widespread that one-third of all Irish farmers could not support their families. Then, in the mid-1840s, a new crisis in the form of a blight that killed the one staple food source for Irish peasants—the potato—led millions to flee the island. Most Irish immigrants had few marketable skills and they arrived penniless with little or no chance of finding employment. As the flow of immigrants increased, the traditional labor shortage in America was replaced by a **labor glut**, and the social and economic status of all workers declined accordingly.

**labor glut** Oversupply of labor in relation to the number of jobs available.



Water-powered textile factories were complex, noisy, and dangerous places to work. As shown here, many machines were powered by a common drive shaft and so remained in motion all the time. Working around the constantly whirring equipment often led to injury or death for what one nineteenth-century magazine described as “the human portion of the machine.” The Granger Collection, New York.

Not only were the new immigrants poor and often unskilled; most were also culturally different from native-born Americans. Religion was their primary cultural distinction: most were Roman Catholic, whereas the majority of Americans claimed to be Protestant whether they worshiped actively or not. Many also held anti-Catholic sentiments handed down from earlier generations of Protestant immigrants who had fled Catholic persecution. In religion, then, as well as in language, dress, and eating and drinking habits, the new immigrants were very different from the sorts of people whose culture had come to dominate American society.

Poverty, cultural distinctiveness, and a desire to live among people who understood their ways and spoke their language brought new immigrants together in neighborhoods. In New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, people with the same culture and religion built churches, stores, pubs or beer halls, and other familiar institutions that helped them cope with the shock of transplantation from Europe and gave them a chance to adapt gradually to life in the United States. They also started fraternal organizations and clubs to overcome the loneliness, isolation, and powerlessness they were experiencing.

### Living Conditions in Blue-Collar America

Working conditions for **blue-collar workers** in factories reflected the labor supply, the amount of capital available to the manufacturing company, and the personal philosophy of the factory owner. Girls at Lowell's factories described an environment of familiar paternalism. Factory managers and boarding-house keepers supervised every aspect of their lives in much the same manner that authoritarian fathers saw to the details of life on traditional New England farms. As for the work itself, one mill girl commented that it was “not half so hard as... attending the dairy, washing, cleaning house, and cooking.” What bothered factory workers most was the repetitive nature of the work and the resulting boredom. One of Lowell’s employees described the tedium. “The time is often apt to drag heavily till the dinner hour arrives,” she reported. “Perhaps some part of the work becomes deranged and stops; the constant friction causes a belt of

**blue-collar workers** Workers who wear work clothes, such as coveralls and jeans, on the job; their work is likely to involve manual labor.

leather to burst into a flame; a stranger visits the room, and scans the features and dress of its inmates inquiringly; and there is little else to break the monotony.”

Gradually, Slater’s and Lowell’s well-meaning paternalism became rare as factory owners withdrew from overseeing day-to-day operations. The labor glut wiped out both decent wages and the sorts of incentives the early manufacturing pioneers had employed. Not only did wages fall but laborers were also expected to find their own housing, food, and entertainment. Hulking **tenements** soon sprang up, replacing the open fields and clusters of small homes that once had dominated the urban landscape. Large houses formerly occupied by domestic manufacturers and their apprentices were broken up into tiny apartments by profit-hungry speculators who rented them to desperate laborers. In cities like New York, laborers lived fifty to a house in some working-class areas. As population densities reached 150 people an acre in such neighborhoods, sewage disposal, drinking water, and trash removal became difficult to provide. Life in such conditions was grossly unpleasant and extremely unhealthy: epidemics of typhus, cholera, and other crowd diseases swept through the slums periodically.

### Life and Culture Among a New Middle Class

Large-scale manufacturing not only changed industrial work but also introduced demands for a new class of skilled managerial and clerical employees. Under the old system of man-

ufacturing, the master craftsman or his wife had managed the company’s accounts, hired journeymen and apprentices, purchased raw materials, and seen to the delivery of finished products. The size of the new factories made such direct contact between owners, workers, and products impossible. To fill the void, a new class of professionals came into being. In these days before the invention of the typewriter, firms such as Lowell’s Boston Manufacturing Company employed teams of young men as clerks. These clerks kept accounts, wrote orders, and drafted correspondence, all in longhand. As elite owners such as Lowell and his partners became wrapped up in building new factories, pursuing investors, and entering new markets, both clerical and manufacturing employees were increasingly supervised by professional managers.

One distinguishing characteristic of the new **white-collar workers** was their relative youth. These young people, many of them the sons and daughters of rural farmers, had flocked to newly emerging cities in pursuit of formal education. They stayed to seek employment away from the economic instability and **provincialism** of the farm. Young men attended school when and where they could get financial assistance and then settled down where they could find employment and the company of others like themselves. And while middle-class men found employment as clerks, bookkeepers, and managers, middle-class women parlayed their formal education and their gender’s perceived gift for nurturing children into work as teachers. It became acceptable for women to work as teachers for several years before marriage, and many avoided marriage altogether to pursue their hard-won careers.

Middle-class men and women tended to put off marriage as long as possible while they established themselves socially and economically. They also tended to have fewer children than their parents had. In the new urban middle-class setting, parents felt compelled to send their children to school so that they could take their place on the career ladder chosen by their parents. Adding nothing to family income, children thus became economic liabilities rather than assets, and middle-class adults used a combination of late marriage and various forms of birth control to keep families small.

A lack of traditional ties affected the lives of both married and unmarried middle-class people. Many unmarried men and women seeking their fortunes in town boarded

**tenements** Urban apartment houses, usually with minimal facilities for sanitation, safety, and comfort.

**white-collar workers** Workers able to wear white shirts on the job because they do no grubby manual labor.

**provincialism** The limited and narrow perspective thought to be characteristic of people in rural areas.

in private homes or rooming houses. After marriage, middle-class men and women often moved into private town homes, isolating themselves and their children from perceived dangers in the faceless city but also cutting them off from the comforting sociability of traditional country life. Accordingly, these young people crafted new urban structures that might provide the missing companionship and guidance.

Obviously some sought the company of women like Helen Jewett. Most, however, found companionship in **voluntary associations**. Students in colleges and universities formed a variety of discussion groups, preprofessional clubs, and benevolent societies. After graduation, groups such as the Odd Fellows and the Masons brought people together for companionship. Such organizations helped enforce traditional values through rigid membership standards stressing moral character, upright behavior, and, above all, order.

Members of the new middle class also used their organizing skills to press for reforms. Although the elite class of factory owners and financiers generally formed the leadership for such organizations as the American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—each a multimillion-dollar reforming enterprise—young middle-class men and women provided the rank and file of charity workers.

In addition to their youth, another characteristic that prevailed among this newly forming class was deep anxiety. Although their education and skills earned them jobs with greater prestige than those of the average worker, these clerks and supervisors could be laid off or demoted to working-class status at any time. Also, the danger of imposters who might use the trappings of gentility to take advantage of the new urban scene led to a very strict set of rules for making social connections. Helen Jewett's death illustrated the dangers posed by and to pretenders to middle-class gentility.

### Social Life for a Genteel Class

The changes in lifestyle that affected working-class and middle-class Americans were in large part an outcome of changes in the daily lives of those who owned and operated manufacturing businesses. In earlier years, when journeymen and apprentices had lived with master craftsmen, they were in effect members of a craftsman's extended family. The master craftsman/owner exercised great authority over his workers but felt obligated to care for them almost as a parent would have done.

Crammed together in the same household, owner and workers shared the same general lifestyle, kept the same hours, ate the same food, and enjoyed the same leisure activities. The factory system ended this relationship. The movement of workers out of the owners' homes permitted members of the emerging elite class to develop a **genteel** lifestyle aimed at the complete separation of their private and public lives. Instead of drinking, eating, and playing with their employees, business owners began to socialize with one another in private clubs and in church and civic organizations. Instead of attending the popular theater, elite patrons began endowing opera companies and other highbrow forms of entertainment.

The lives of the factory owners' wives also changed. The mistress of a traditional manufacturing household had been responsible for important tasks in the operation of the business. Genteel women, in contrast, were expected to leave business dealings to men. Instead, one activity that consumed genteel women was motherhood. Magazines and advice manuals, which began appearing during the 1820s and 1830s, rejected the traditional adage of "spare the rod, spoil the child," replacing it with an insistence on gentle nurturing. One leader in this movement was author and teacher Bronson Alcott. Alcott denied the

### voluntary associations

Organizations or clubs through which individuals engage in voluntary service, usually associated with charity or reform.

**genteel** The manner and style associated with elite classes, usually characterized by elegance, grace, and politeness.

# Investigating America

## The Press and Helen Jewett, 1836

The United States of the 1830s was rapidly becoming more modern. One measure of its emerging modernity, a feature with which we are all too familiar today, was the rise of a sensationalist press. The murder of Helen Jewett (really Dorcas Doyen) presented an irresistible opportunity for this new medium. Although a few responsible newspapers printed factually based stories about the victim's early life, sensationalist newspapers seeking larger sales and plumped-up reputations for being investigative published ever more exaggerated accounts of Jewett's life and death. The *New York Herald*, for example, continued to print romanticized stories about Jewett even after it became generally known that her early life was rather unremarkable and that the charming Miss Jewett was a fictional creation by an intelligent and inventive woman who was intent on shaping her life on her own terms. The following is taken from a story printed in the *Herald* on April 12, 1836.

.....

**H**er private history is most remarkable—her character equally so...In Augusta, Maine, lived a highly respectable gentleman, Judge Western [sic], by name. Some of the female members of his family pitying the bereaved condition of young Dorcas invited her to live at the Judge's house. At that time Dorcas was young, beautiful, innocent, modest, and ingenuous. Her good qualities and sprightly temper won the good feelings of the Judge's family. She became a chere-amie of his daughters—a companion and a playmate....

After having continued at the Academy for some time, Dorcas, during the summer of 1829, went to spend the vacation at a distant relative's at Norridgewock, a town on the Kennebeck river, about 28 miles above Augusta. Dorcas was then sixteen years of age—and one of the most lovely, interesting, black eyed girls, that ever appeared in that place.

**infant depravity** The idea that children are naturally sinful because they share in the original sin of the human race but have not learned the discipline to control their evil instincts.  
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In this town, in the course of visiting, she became acquainted with a young man, by the name of H—Sp—y, a fine youth, elegant and educated, since said to be a Cashier in one of the banks of Augusta. After a short acquaintance with him, all was gone that constitutes the honor and ornament of the female character....

She returned after a short season to Augusta. Her situation soon became known in the Judge's family. A quarrel ensued. She left her protector, after having in a moment of passion lost all the rules of virtue and morality.

After having recovered from her first lapse from the path of virtue, she retreated to Portland, took the name of Maria B. Benson, and became a regular Aspasia among the young men, lawyers, and merchants.

.....

- Although it was generally known that young Dorcas was actually hired as a serving girl in Judge Weston's household, this story suggests that she was a guest or companion in the justice's home. Why would a news writer choose to "revise" the facts?
- How does the account of the seduction of the teenage Dorcas add to the story? Why might this version have had more appeal than the truth for popular audiences?
- Aspasia was the mistress of Pericles, the foremost Athenian statesman of classical Greece. Despite a disreputable background, Aspasia used her intelligence and wit to charm the political elite of Athens in the fifth-century BCE. Though charming, she frequently was the target of public attacks that painted her as a common harlot. Whom does the writer want the audience to blame for Dorcas Doyen's descent into prostitution? Why?



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

concept of **infant depravity** that had led Puritan parents during the colonial era to break their children's will, often through harsh measures. Instead, he stated emphatically that "the child must be treated as a free, self-guiding, self-controlling being."

Books like Alcott's *Conversations with Children on the Gospels* (1836–1837) flooded forth during these years and appealed greatly to isolated and underemployed women. Many

adopted the advertised **cult of domesticity** completely. Turning inward, these women centered their lives on their homes and children. In doing so, they believed they were performing an important duty for God and country and fulfilling their most important, perhaps their only, natural calling.

Other genteel women agreed with the general tone of the domestic message but widened the woman's supposedly natural sphere outward, beyond the nursery, to encompass the whole world. They banded together with like-minded women to get out into the world in order to reform it. "I want to be where every arrangement will have unreserved and constant reference to eternity," Sarah Huntington Smith explained. Smith herself chose to become a missionary. Other women during the 1830s and 1840s involved themselves in a variety of reform movements, such as founding Sunday schools or opposing alcohol abuse. These causes let them use their nurturing and purifying talents to improve what appeared to be an increasingly chaotic and immoral society, the world represented by Helen Jewett.

**cult of domesticity** The belief that women's proper role lies in domestic pursuits.

## A New Empire in the West

- ★ **How did most Americans imagine "the West"? To what extent were their imaginings accurate?**
- ★ **Who generally were the first pioneers to move into the West? How did they and those who followed actually move westward and establish communities there?**

While life in the cotton South and manufacturing Northeast underwent radical change in their own way, the American West, too, was experiencing wholesale transformation. Enterprising capitalists often led the way in systematic exploration, looking for furs, gold, and other sources of quick profit. But it did not take long before a wide variety of others followed. Whether they expected a wasteland, a paradise, or something in between, what all of these newcomers to the West did find was a natural and cultural world that was much more complex than anything they had imagined.

### Moving Westward

The image of the solitary trapper braving a hostile environment and even more hostile Indians is the stuff of American adventure novels and movies. Although characters such as Christopher "Kit" Carson and Jeremiah "Crow Killer" Johnson really did exist, these men were merely advance agents for an **extractive industry** geared to the efficient removal of animal pelts.

What drew men like Carson and Johnson into the Far West in the 1830s and 1840s was an innovation in the fur business instigated by long-time entrepreneur William Henry Ashley. Taking advantage of the presence of large numbers of underemployed young men seeking fortune and adventure in the West, Ashley broke the long tradition of depending exclusively on Indian labor for collecting furs. In 1825 he set up the highly successful rendezvous system. Under this arrangement, individual trappers—white adventurers like Carson and Johnson, African Americans such as James Beckwourth, and a large number of Indians—combed the upper Missouri, trapping, curing, and packing furs. Once each year Ashley conducted a fur rendezvous in the mountains, where the trappers brought their furs and exchanged them for goods. Pioneer missionary Pierre Jean de Smet called these gatherings "one of the most picturesque features of early frontier life in the Far West."

The fur trade made its owners very rich and important. But the success of their complex business inadvertently led to its decline. The expansion in international commerce flowing out of the fur trade helped open the way for importing vast amounts of silk

**extractive industry** An industry, such as fur trapping, logging, or mining, that removes natural resources from the environment.

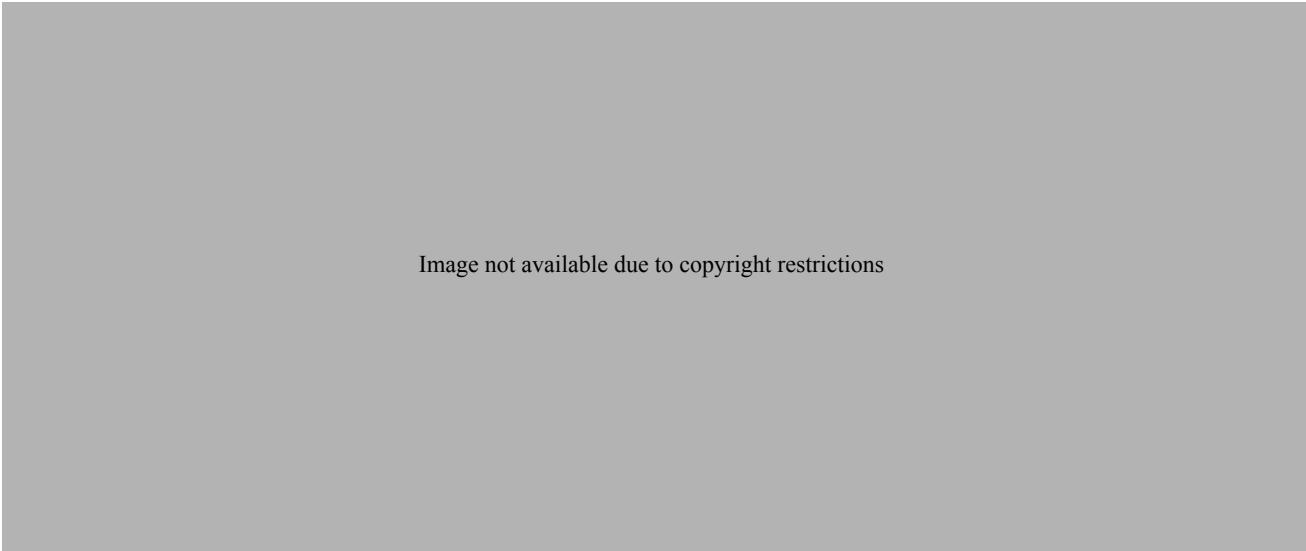


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from Asia. Soon silk hats became a fashion rage among luxury-loving consumers in both America and Europe, displacing the beaver hats that had consumed most American furs. In addition, the efficiency with which these gigantic organizations extracted fur from the western wilderness virtually wiped out beaver populations in the Rocky Mountains. Through the 1830s and 1840s, the beaver business slowed to a near standstill.

Often the first people to join the former fur trappers in settling the West were not rugged yeoman farmers but highly organized and well-financed land speculators and developers. From the earliest days of the republic, federal public land policy favored those who could afford large purchases and pay in cash. Liberalization of the land laws during the first half of the nineteenth century put smaller tracts—for less money and on credit terms—within reach of more citizens, but speculators continued to play a role in land distribution by offering often even smaller tracts and more liberal credit. This was particularly true as states granted rights-of-way, first to canal companies and then, increasingly, to railroad developers as a way of financing internal improvements. Land along transportation routes was especially valuable, and developers could often turn an outright grant into enormous profits.

A third group of expectant fortune hunters was lured into the Far West by the same magnet that had drawn the Spanish to the American Southwest: gold. Since colonial times, Americans had persistently hunted precious metals, usually without much success. The promise of gold continued to draw people westward, however, onto Winnebago lands in 1827 and into Cherokee territory in 1829. But the most impressive case of gold fever would not strike until 1848, when a group of laborers digging a millrace in northern California found flakes and then chunks of gold. Despite efforts to suppress the news, word leaked out, and by mid-May 1848, men were rushing from all over California and Oregon into the Sierra foothills northeast of Sacramento to prospect for gold. By September, news reached the East that the light work of panning for gold in California could yield \$50 a day, two months' wages for an average northern workingman. In 1849 more than a hundred thousand **forty-niners** took up residence in California.

Distinct waves of Americans pushed westward into the areas opened by gold seekers, fur trappers, and land speculators. All of these migrants were responding to promises of abundant land in America's interior. But different groups were reacting to very different

**forty-niners** Prospectors who streamed into California in 1849, after the discovery of gold northeast of New Helvetia in 1848.

conditions in the East, and those differences gave shape to their migrations and to the settlements they eventually created. Some saw the unsettled nature of the West as a refuge for establishing or expanding particular religious or social practices. Many Protestant sects sent battalions of settlers and missionaries to carve out new “Plymouth Colonies” in the West. The most notable of these religious pioneer groups was the Mormons, who came to dominate the Great Basin Region.

This movement was founded in upstate New York in 1830 by **Joseph Smith Jr.** Announcing that he had experienced a revelation that called for him to establish a community in the wilderness, Smith led his congregation as a unit out of New York in 1831. Driven by persecution from settlements in Ohio and Missouri, Smith eventually relocated his congregation to the Illinois frontier, founding the city of Nauvoo in 1839. Continuing conversions to the new faith, which stressed notions of community, faith, and hard work, brought a flood of Mormons to Smith’s Zion in Illinois. In 1844 Nauvoo, with a population of fifteen thousand Mormons, dwarfed every other Illinois city.

Despite their growth in numbers and prosperity, Smith’s followers in Nauvoo continued to be victims of religious and economic persecution. On June 27, 1844, Smith was murdered by a mob in neighboring Carthage, Illinois. The remaining church leaders concluded that the Mormons would never be safe until they moved far from mainstream American civilization. **Brigham Young**, Smith’s successor, decided to search for a safe refuge beyond the Rocky Mountains and led sixteen hundred Mormons to the valley of the **Great Salt Lake**.

Whether they were hopeful cotton planters from the South, Yankee farmers from New England, or religious refugees in the **Great Basin**, most people went west not as stalwart individualists but as part of a larger community. Beginning with early parties going to Ohio or Texas in the 1820s, most traveled in small to medium-sized groups. Even those few who arrived alone seldom stayed that way. And during the 1830s and 1840s, migrating parties became larger and more organized. Describing an Oregon-bound wagon train in the 1840s, one young woman reported that “We were not allowed to travel across the plains in any haphazard manner,” she continued. “No family or individual was permitted to go off alone from the company.” Among such groups on the **Oregon Trail**, life remained much as it had been at home. “Everybody was supposed to rise at daylight, and while the women were preparing breakfast, the men rounded up the cattle, took down the tents, yoked the oxen to the wagons and made everything ready for an immediate start after the morning meal was finished.” Even social customs remained the same. “Life on the plains was a primitive edition of life in town or village,” the same pioneer woman remarked. “We were expected to visit our neighbors when we paused for rest.” And so life went on during the six months it took to cross the more than 2,000 miles separating the settled part of the nation from the **Oregon Country**.

Many pioneers had no legal claim to the lands they settled. People bankrupted by unscrupulous speculators or by their own misfortune or mismanagement often settled wherever they could find a spread that seemed unoccupied. Thousands of squatters living on unsold federal lands were a problem for the national government when the time came to sell off the public domain. Always with an eye to winning votes, western politicians frequently advocated “squatter rights.” Western congressmen finally maneuvered the passage of a **preemption bill** in 1841, allowing squatters to settle on unsurveyed federal land. Of course, this right did not guarantee that they would have the money to buy the land once it came on the market, or that they would make profitable use of it in the meantime. Thus shoestring farming, perpetual debt, and an uncertain future continued to challenge frontier farmers.

**Joseph Smith Jr.** Founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormon Church, who transcribed the Book of Mormon and led his congregation westward to Illinois; he was later murdered by an anti-Mormon mob.

**Brigham Young** Mormon leader who took over in 1844 after Joseph Smith’s death and guided the Mormons from Illinois to Utah, where they established a permanent home for the church.

**Great Salt Lake** A shallow, salty lake in the Great Basin near which the Mormons established a permanent settlement in 1847.

**Great Basin** A desert region of the western United States including most of Nevada and parts of Utah, California, Idaho, Wyoming, and Oregon.

**Oregon Trail** The overland route followed by thousands of settlers in the 1840s from St. Louis to the Pacific Northwest.

**Oregon Country** The region to the north of Spanish California extending from the crest of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast.

**preemption bill** A temporary law that gave squatters the right to buy land they had settled on before it was offered for sale at public auction.

**frontier line** The outer limit of agricultural settlement bordering on areas still under Indian control or unoccupied.

### Pioneer Life in the New Country

Migrants to cotton country in the Mississippi Valley and beyond brought a particular lifestyle with them. Often starting out as landless herders, migrating families carved out claims beyond the **frontier line** and survived on a mixture of raised

and gathered food until they could put the land into agricultural production. The Indians who preceded them in the Mississippi Valley had already cleared large expanses of land for agriculture. Removal of the Indians to the Far West and the continuing devastation of Indian populations by disease meant that southern frontiersmen could plant corn and cotton quickly and reap early profits with minimal labor.

During the pioneer phase of southern frontier life, all the members of migrating families devoted most of their time to keeping the family alive. Even their social and recreational lives tended to center on practical tasks. House building, planting, and harvesting were often done in cooperation with neighbors. Such occasions saw plenty of food and homemade whiskey consumed, and at day's end, music and dancing often lasted long into the night. Women gathered together separately for projects such as group quilting. Another community event for southwestern settlers was the periodic religious revival, which brought people from miles around to revival meetings that might last for days. Here they could make new acquaintances, court sweethearts, and discuss the common failings in their souls and on their farms.

For migrants to areas such as Michigan and Oregon, the overall frontier experience differed in many respects from that in the Mississippi Valley. In the Old Northwest, Indians had also cleared the land for planting; pioneers snatched up the Indians' deserted farms. Here, however, professional surveyors had already carved the land into neat, rectangular lots. These surveys generally included provision for a township, where settlers quickly established villages similar to those left behind in New England, in which they re-created the social institutions they already knew and respected—first and foremost, law courts, churches, and schools.

Conditions in the Oregon Country resembled those farther east in most respects, but some significant differences did exist. Most important, the Indians in the Oregon Country had never practiced agriculture—their environment was so rich in fish, meat, and wild vegetables that farming was unnecessary—and they still occupied their traditional homelands and outnumbered whites significantly. Although both of these facts might have had a profound impact on life in Oregon, early pioneers were bothered by neither. Large, open prairies flanking the Columbia, Willamette, and other rivers provided abundant fertile farmland. And the Indians helped rather than hindered the pioneers.

### The Hispanic Southwest

**Junípero Serra** Spanish missionary who went to California in 1769; he and his successors established near the California coast a chain of missions that depended on Indian labor.

The physical and cultural environments in the Southwest differed greatly from those in the Pacific Northwest. One major reason for the difference was that Spain and then Mexico had controlled the region and had left a lasting cultural imprint.

Systematic Spanish exploration into most of the American Southwest did not begin until the eighteenth century. In California, garrisons were established at San Diego and Monterey in 1769 and 1770, and **Junípero Serra**, a Franciscan friar, established a mission, San Diego de Alcalá, near the present city of San Diego. Eventually Serra and his successors established twenty-one missions extending from San Diego to the town of Sonoma, north of San Francisco.

The mission system provided a framework for Spanish settlement in California. California Indians provided the labor to surround the missions with groves, vineyards, and lush farms, but not willingly: The missionaries often forced them into the

missions, where they became virtual slaves, suffering a terrible death rate from disease and harsh treatment. By the 1830s, an elite class of Spanish-speaking **Californios** began to snatch up the rich lands once owned by Catholic missions. At first, these Californios welcomed outsiders as neighbors and trading partners. Ships from the United States called at California ports regularly, picking up cargoes of beef **tallow**, cow hides, and other commodities to be shipped around the world, and settlers who promised to open new lands and business opportunities were given generous grants and assistance.

**John Sutter**, for example, received an outright grant of land extending from the Sierra foothills southwest to the Sacramento Valley, where in 1839 he established a colony called New Helvetia. A tribute to the cosmopolitanism in Northern California, people of many races and classes could be found strolling the lanes in New Helvetia and other settlements.

A similar pattern of interracial cooperation existed in other Spanish North American provinces. In 1821, trader William Becknell began selling and trading goods along the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis to New Mexico. By 1824, the business had become so profitable that people from all over the frontier moved in to create a permanent Santa Fe trade. An elite class emerged in Santa Fe from the intermingled fortunes and intermarriages among Indian, European, and American populations, and a strong kinship system developed. Thus, based on kinship, the Hispanic leaders of New Mexico consistently worked across cultural lines, whether to fight off Texan aggression or eventually to lobby for **annexation** to the United States.

In Texas, economic desperation combined with cultural insensitivity and misunderstanding to create the sort of tensions that were rare in New Mexico. As a result of the relative lack of harmony and the enormous stretches of land that separated ethnic groups in Texas, both **Texians** and **Tejanos** tended to cling to their own ways.

### The Mormon Community

Physical and cultural conditions in the Great Basin led to a completely different social and cultural order. Utah is a high-desert plateau where water is scarce and survival depends on careful management. The tightly knit community of Mormons was perfectly suited to such an inhospitable place.

Mormons followed a simple principle: “Land belongs to the Lord, and his Saints are to use so much as they can work profitably.” Thus the church might assign 40 acres to a man with several wives, a large number of children, and enough wealth to hire help, but a man with one wife, few children, and little capital might receive only 10 acres. However, the larger landholder had to provide four times as much labor as provided by the man with the small acreage when the church ordered the construction of irrigation systems or other public works. Cooperation among the Mormons was more rigidly controlled and formal than among settlers elsewhere. As on other frontiers, when the system worked it was because it was well suited to natural conditions.

Mormons had their own unique religious and social culture, and because of their bad experiences in Missouri and Illinois, they were unaccepting of strangers. The General Authorities of the church welcomed all who would embrace the new religion but made it difficult for non-Mormons to stay in the region. The one exception was the American Indian population. Because Indians occupied a central place in Mormon sacred literature, the Mormons practiced an accepting and gentle Indian policy. Like other missionaries, Mormons insisted that Indians convert to their religion and lifestyle, but the Mormon hierarchy used its enormous power in Utah to prevent private violence against Indians whenever possible.

**Californios** Spanish colonists in California in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**tallow** Hard fat obtained from the bodies of cattle and other animals and used to make candles and soap.

**John Sutter** Swiss immigrant who founded a colony in California; the discovery of gold on his property in the Coloma Valley, northeast of New Helvetia (Sacramento) in 1848 attracted hordes of miners who seized his land, leaving him financially ruined.

**annexation** The incorporation of a territory into an existing political unit such as a neighboring country.

**Texians** Non-Hispanic settlers in Texas in the nineteenth century.

**Tejanos** Mexican settlers in Texas in the nineteenth century.

### Tying the West to the Nation

Rapid expansion created an increased demand for reliable transportation and communications between the new regions in the West and the rest of the nation. An early first step in meeting this demand was building the so-called National Road, which between 1815 and 1820 was completed across the Cumberland Gap to the Ohio River at Wheeling, Virginia. By 1838 this state-of-the-art highway—with its evenly graded surface, gravel pavement, and stone bridges—had been pushed all the way to Vandalia, Illinois. Within a few more years, it reached St. Louis, the great jumping-off point for the Far West.

At the same time, a series of other roads were beginning to merge into a transportation network. Eventually towns from Portland, Maine, to Saint Augustine, Florida, and from Natchez, Mississippi, to New Haven, Connecticut, were linked by intersecting highways (Map 11.2). Increasing numbers of people used these new roads to head west looking for new opportunities. Farmers, craftsmen, fur hunters, and others already settled in the West used them too, moving small loads of goods to the nearby towns and small cities that always sprang up along the unfolding transportation routes.

The new roads also linked rural America to an ever-expanding network of waterways that made possible relatively inexpensive long-distance hauling of heavy and bulky products. Completed in 1825, the Erie Canal revolutionized shipping: the cost of transporting a ton of oats from Buffalo to Albany fell from \$100 to \$15, and the transit time dropped from twenty days to just eight. The spectacular success of the Erie Canal prompted businessmen, farmers, and politicians throughout the country to promote canal building. State governments offered exclusive charters to canal-building companies, giving them direct financial grants, guaranteeing their credit, and easing their way in every possible manner. The result was an explosion in canal building that lasted through the 1830s (see Map 11.2). Hoping for large profits, entrepreneurs such as John Jacob Astor invested heavily in canal building, which cost as much as \$20,000 to \$30,000 per mile. Before 1836, careful investors could make a 15 to 20 percent **return on capital** in canal building, but after that, most canal companies faced bankruptcy, as did the states that had helped finance them.

Steam power took canal building's impact on inland transportation a revolutionary step further. Steam technology, especially, had applications in areas without navigable rivers. Towns lacking water routes to the interior began losing revenue from inland trade to canal towns such as Albany and Philadelphia. Predictably, entrepreneurs in places like Baltimore looked for other ways to move cargo. In fact, demands from Baltimore merchants spurred Maryland to take the lead in developing a new transportation technology: the steam railroad. In 1828 the state chartered the **Baltimore and Ohio Railroad** (B&O). The B&O soon demonstrated its potential when inventor Peter Cooper's steam locomotive *Tom Thumb* sped 13 miles along B&O track.

Although rail transport enjoyed some success during this early period, it could not rival water-based transportation systems. By 1850 individual companies had laid approximately 9,000 miles of track, but not in any coherent network. Both track size and the distance between tracks varied from company to company. As a result, loaded railcars could not be transferred from one company's line to another's. Other problems also plagued the fledgling industry—boiler explosions, fires, and derailments were common. And in state capitals, investors who hoped to profit from canals, roads, and steam shipping lobbied to prevent legislatures from supporting rail expansion.

As the nation expanded, and as economics and social life became more complicated, Americans felt growing pressure to keep up with news at home and in the nation's new

**return on capital** The yield on money that has been invested in an enterprise or product.

**Baltimore and Ohio Railroad** First steam railroad commissioned in the United States; it resorted to using horse-drawn cars after a stagecoach horse beat its pioneer locomotive in a race.



MAP II.2 Roads, Canals, Railways, and Telegraph Lines in 1850

A transportation and communications revolution took place between 1820 and 1850 as roads, canals, rails, and telegraph lines reached out to bind together the nation. The connections made by the lines of communications shown here ensured economic growth, but brought to light the vast differences between regional cultures.

territories. The revolution in transportation helped them do so by making the transport of printed matter faster and cheaper. At the same time, revolutions in printing technology and paper production significantly lowered the cost of printing and speeded up production. Organizations such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society joined newspaper and magazine publishers in producing a flood of printed

**circulation** The number of copies of a publication sold or distributed.

**electric telegraph** Device invented by Samuel F. B. Morse in 1836 that transmits coded messages along a wire over long distances; the first electronic communications device.

material. In 1790 the ninety-two newspapers being published in America had a total **circulation** of around 4 million. By 1835 the number of periodicals had risen to 1,258, and circulation had surpassed 90 million.

At the same time, a true revolution in information technology was in its starting phases. In the mid-1830s, Samuel F. B. Morse began experimenting with the world's first form of electronic communication: the **electric telegraph**. Morse's transmitter was simple in design, consisting of a key that closed an electrical circuit, thereby sending a pulse along a connected wire. Morse developed a code consisting of dots (short pulses) and dashes (longer pulses) that represented letters of the alphabet. With this device a skilled operator could quickly key out long messages and send them at nearly the speed of light. In 1843, Congress agreed to finance an experimental telegraph line from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore. Morse sent his first message on the experimental line on May 24, 1844. His message, "What hath God wrought!" was a fitting opening line for the telecommunications revolution.

## Summary

After the War of 1812, as an industrial revolution overturned the economies in Great Britain and the American Northeast, economic options for southerners also changed radically. Although they clothed their new lifestyle in romanticized medieval garb, they were creating an altogether new kind of economy and society. The efficient production of cotton by the newly reorganized South was an essential aspect of the emerging national market economy and a powerful force in the Great Transformation.

Change in the North was more obvious. As factories replaced craft shops and cities replaced towns, the entire fabric of northern society seemed to come unraveled. A revamped social structure replaced the traditional order as unskilled and semiskilled workers, a new class of clerks, and the genteel elite carved out new lives. The new cities also developed a dark underside where the tawdry glamour that characterized Helen Jewett's life often led to grotesque death. As in the South, the outcome was a remarkable transformation in the lives of everyone in the region.

Meanwhile, the westward movement of Americans steadily gained momentum. Some successful entrepre-

neurs such as William Henry Ashley made enormous profits from their fur-trading empires. Land speculators and gold seekers, too, helped open areas to settlement. Such pioneers were usually followed by distinct waves of migrants who went west in search of land and opportunity. In Texas, Oregon, California, Utah, and elsewhere in the West, communities sprang up like weeds. Here they interacted—and often clashed—with one another, with those who had prior claims to the land, and with the land itself. As a result, a variety of cultures and economies developed in the expansive section of the country.

Tying the regions together was a new network of roads, waterways, and communications systems that accelerated the process of change. After 1840, it was possible to ship goods and information from any one section of the country to any other, and more and more people in all sections became aware of the enormity of the transformation taking place and the glaring differences between the nation's various regions. The twin outcomes would be greater integration in the national economy and increasing tension between mutually dependent participants in the new marketplace.

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# CHAPTER 12

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### ***Reactions to Changing Conditions***

- Romanticism and Genteel Culture
- IT MATTERS TODAY:** The Spread of Mass Literacy
- Culture Among Workers and Slaves
- Radical Attempts to Regain Community
- A Second Great Awakening
- The Middle Class and Moral Reform
- Free and Slave Labor Protests
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** The Declaration of Sentiments, 1848

### ***The Whig Alternative to Jacksonian Democracy***

- The End of the Old Party Structure
- The New Political Coalition
- Van Buren in the White House
- The Log-Cabin and Hard-Cider Campaign of 1840

### ***The Triumph of Manifest Destiny***

- The Rise of Manifest Destiny
- Expansion to the North and West
- Revolution in Texas
- The Politics of Manifest Destiny
- Expansion and the Election of 1844
- The War with Mexico and Sectional Crisis

- INVESTIGATING AMERICA:** James K. Polk's War Message to Congress, 1846

### ***Summary***

# Responses to the Great Transformation

## 1828–1848

### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Lydia Sigourney**

Nothing in her upbringing would have marked Lydia Howard Huntley's potential as a leading literary light. Her father, a revolutionary war veteran, was just a gardener on the estate of a Connecticut matron. But his employer recognized a budding talent in the young girl and encouraged her. Under the older woman's patronage, Lydia began writing poetry at a young age, and when the time came, her sponsor's patrician family saw to it that the girl received the education thought fitting for young ladies in New England. Like many young women of modest means, Lydia followed up her education by becoming a teacher and then, with the help of her benefactors, started an academy for young women in Hartford. Her career culminated with the publication in 1815 of teaching materials under the title *Moral Pieces, in Prose and Verse*.

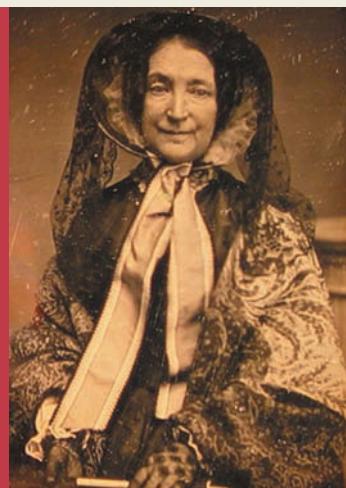
Shortly after reaching this pinnacle, she met and married a Hartford widower, Charles Sigourney. Lydia gave up her career in teaching to devote herself to service as a wife. However, her desire to write continued. For years she published poems and short prose pieces anonymously, much to the chagrin of her conservative husband. However, his declining fortunes and the failing health of her parents led Lydia to rebel against conventions and begin selling her work and trading on her name. Between 1833 and 1835, she sold nine books and a number of articles and other pieces to well-known periodicals. In the process, she became the first American woman to earn an entirely independent living as a commercial writer.

Although many critics then and later have dismissed Sigourney's writing—Edgar Allan Poe called her work “shallow and sentimental”—and certainly would not classify her with Longfellow and other of her male contemporaries, her work may have had a greater influence in her own time than did theirs. Focusing on themes that were popular among women of the elite and emerging middling classes, her writing helped to form a literary basis for female culture during the

#### **LYDIA SIGOURNEY**

*Giving voice to the Romantic sentimentalism that was setting the tone for middle-class culture in early-nineteenth-century America, women writers like Lydia Sigourney became virtual overnight celebrities, selling thousands of books to newly emerging urban consumers.*

Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.



middle decades of the nineteenth century. And, in part because of writers like Sigourney who promoted awareness of a literature designed especially for them, women's literacy grew at a revolutionary pace, from about 50 percent of that of white males in 1780 to over 90 percent by 1850. As Lydia Sigourney chose to write, so a generation of American women chose to read, forever changing American society and culture.

Lydia Sigourney reflected many of the forces that were shaping America in the years before midcentury. These were years when anxiety was rising over the industrialization and urbanization that was sweeping across the American North and over the expansion of cotton capitalism in the American South. Sigourney shared with born-again Christians, transcendentalists, socialists, and other communitarians a belief in human perfectibility that drove them all into a frenzy of work and experimentation. In northern cities, on southern plantations, and at western revival meetings, members of all social classes were crafting cultural expressions designed to give meaning to their lives and lend shape to a society that seemed to be losing all direction. At the same time, ambitious politicians were re-creating the art of politics in line with new economic and cultural imperatives. A new, modern, and much more complicated America clearly was in the making.

## Reactions to Changing Conditions

- ★ How did developments in American arts and letters reflect the spirit of change during the Jacksonian era?
- ★ What were the cultural consequences of these developments?

Diversity in American life expanded as industrialization and urbanization mushroomed in the Northeast, as cotton cultivation and its peculiar cultural and labor systems expanded across the South, and as hundreds of communities grew up in the West. At the same time, however, increasing economic interdependence between regions and revolutionary transportation and communications systems pulled the geographically expansive nation closer together. These opposing forces of diversity and integration helped to define the social, political, and cultural trends that would shape the American nation.

### Romanticism and Genteel Culture

Underlying the new mood in American culture was an artistic and philosophical attitude that swept across the Atlantic and found a fertile new home in North America. **Romanticism**, the European rebellion against Enlightenment reason,

stressed the heart over the mind, the mystical over the rational. The United States, with its millions of acres of wilderness, teeming populations of wild animals, and colorful frontier myths, was the perfect setting for romanticism to flower. Many of the era's leading intellectuals emphasized the positive aspects of life in the United States, celebrating it in forms of religious, literary, and artistic expression. In the process, they launched new forms of thought and presentation that won broad recognition among the genteel and middle classes.

**Romanticism** Artistic and intellectual movement characterized by interest in nature, emphasis on emotion over rationality, and rebellion against social conventions.

# Chronology

<b>1806</b>	Journeyman shoemakers' strike in New York City	<b>1837</b>	Horace Mann heads first public board of education Panic of 1837
<b>1821</b>	Charles Grandison Finney experiences a religious conversion		Ralph Waldo Emerson's "American Scholar" speech
<b>1823</b>	James Fenimore Cooper's <i>The Pioneers</i>		Senate rejects annexation of Texas
<b>1825</b>	Thomas Cole begins Hudson River school of painting		Armed confrontation between Maine and New Brunswick
	Robert Owen establishes community at New Harmony, Indiana	<b>1838</b>	Emerson articulates transcendentalism
<b>1826</b>	Shakers have eighteen communities in the United States		Sarah Grimké publishes <i>Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women</i>
<b>1828</b>	Weavers protest and riot in New York City	<b>1840</b>	Log-cabin campaign
<b>1829</b>	Grand jury in Rochester, New York, declares alcohol most prominent cause of crime		William Henry Harrison elected president
<b>1831</b>	Nat Turner's Rebellion	<b>1841</b>	Brook Farm established
	William Lloyd Garrison begins publishing <i>The Liberator</i>		Death of President Harrison; John Tyler becomes president
<b>1832</b>	Jackson reelected	<b>1842</b>	<i>Commonwealth v. Hunt</i>
<b>1833</b>	Lydia Sigourney publishes bestsellers <i>Letters to Young Ladies and How to Be Happy</i>		Elijah White named federal Indian Agent for Oregon
<b>1834</b>	Riot in Charlestown, Massachusetts, leads to destruction of Catholic convent	<b>1843</b>	Dorothea Dix advocates state-funded insane asylums
	George Bancroft publishes volume 1 of his American history		First wagon train into Oregon
	Formation of National Trades' Union		Oregon adopts First Organic Laws
	Formation of Whig Party	<b>1844</b>	James K. Polk elected president
<b>1835</b>	Five Points riot in New York City	<b>1845</b>	United States annexes Texas
	Texas Revolution begins		Term "manifest destiny" coined
<b>1836</b>	Congress passes the gag rule	<b>1846</b>	War with Mexico begins
	Martin Van Buren elected president		Oregon boundary established
		<b>1848</b>	California declares itself a republic
			Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

**Ralph Waldo Emerson** Philosopher, writer, and poet whose essays and poems made him a central figure in the transcendentalist movement and an important figure in the development of literary expression in the United States.

This new influence had its earliest impact in the religious realm. Reeling under the shock of social change that was affecting every aspect of life, many young people sought a religious anchor to bring themselves some stability. Many, especially in the rising cities in the Northeast, found a voice in New Englander **Ralph Waldo Emerson**.

Emerson was pastor of the prestigious Second Unitarian Church in Boston when tragedy struck: his young wife, Ellen Louisa, died in 1831. Emerson experienced a religious crisis and, looking for new inspiration, traveled to Europe. There he met the famous Romantic writers William Wordsworth and Thomas Carlyle, who influenced him

to seek truth in nature and spirit rather than in rationality and order. Emerson combined this Romantic influence with his already strong Unitarian leaning, creating a new philosophical creed called **transcendentalism**. Recovered from his grief, he returned to the United States to begin a new career as an essayist and lecturer, spreading the transcendentalist message.

"Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion," Emerson told the students at the Harvard Divinity School. "Men have come to speak of revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead." But for Emerson, God was "everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool." Only through direct contact with the **transcendent** power in the universe could men and women know the truth.

Emerson emphasized **nonconformity** and dissent in his writings, and in celebrating the individual, he validated the surging individualism of Jacksonian America. Because each person had to find his or her own path to knowledge, Emerson could extol many of the disturbing aspects of modernizing America as potentially liberating forces. Rather than condemning the grasping for wealth that many said characterized Jacksonian America, Emerson stated that money represented the "prose of life" and was, "in its effects and laws, as beautiful as roses."

Emerson also suggested a bold new direction for American literature. In 1837 he issued a declaration of literary independence from European models in an address entitled "The American Scholar." Young American writers responded enthusiastically. During the twenty years following this speech, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and other writers and poets elaborated the transcendentalist gospel, emphasizing the uniqueness of the individual and the role of literature as a vehicle for self-discovery. "I celebrate myself, and sing myself," Whitman wrote. These writers also carried the Romantic message, celebrating the primitive and the common. Longfellow mythologized Hiawatha and sang the praise of the village blacksmith. In "I Hear America Singing," Whitman conveyed the poetry present in the everyday speech of mechanics, carpenters, and other common folk. The highly influential magazine *The Dial*, edited by Margaret Fuller, helped articulate the transcendentalist message.

Perhaps the most radical of the transcendentalists was Emerson's good friend **Henry David Thoreau**. Emerson and his other followers made the case for self-reliance, but Thoreau embodied it, camping on the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts, where he did his best to live independent of the rapidly modernizing market economy. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately," Thoreau wrote, "and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Like Thoreau, a number of women were also seeking meaning through their writing. The most popular women writers of the day were those who, like Lydia Sigourney, were most successful at communicating the sentimentalized role for the new genteel woman. Catharine Beecher was another woman writer who enjoyed enormous success for her practical advice guides aimed at making women more effective homemakers. The novels of women writers E. D. E. N. Southworth and Susan Warner were among the most popular books published in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Other authors joined Sigourney, Southworth, and Warner in pushing American literature in Romantic directions. James Fenimore Cooper and Nathaniel Hawthorne helped to popularize American themes and scenes in their writing. Even before Emerson's "American Scholar," Cooper had launched a new sort of American novel and American hero. In *The Pioneers* (1823), Cooper introduced Natty Bumppo, also called Hawkeye, a frontiersman whose honesty, independent-mindedness, and skill as a marksman

**transcendentalism** A philosophical and literary movement asserting the existence of God within human beings and in nature, and the belief that intuition is the highest source of knowledge.

**transcendent** Lying beyond the normal range of experience.

**nonconformity** Refusal to accept or conform to the beliefs and practices of the majority.

**Henry David Thoreau** Writer and naturalist and friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson; his best-known work is *Walden* (1854).



# It Matters Today

## THE SPREAD OF MASS LITERACY

During the colonial and early national eras, literacy beyond basics like signing your name was reserved to a small number of elite people in American society. Books were expensive, and newspapers were few in number; there was little opportunity for most people to read and little incentive for them to do so. During the early nineteenth century, however, the spread of public education, the creation of literary and self-improvement societies, and mass publication of books and magazines caused an upsurge in both the availability and the demand for literacy. Leaders like Horace Mann saw in universal literacy a device that would ensure continuation of the American democratic republic, and writers like Lydia Sigourney saw in it a burgeoning marketplace for

making personal fortunes. For their part, young men and women saw in literacy an opportunity to break away from traditional political and economic roles to forge new lives in a new society. From this era onward, Americans took widespread literacy among all classes for granted as part of our national life.

- What developments arose during the early nineteenth century that helped to encourage mass literacy in the United States?
- How would American society today be different if only a wealthy elite minority could read? How would your life be different in such a society?

represented the rough-hewn virtues so beloved by Romantics and popularly associated with the American frontier.

Nathaniel Hawthorne pushed American literary themes in a more gothic direction. In *Twice-Told Tales* (1837), Hawthorne presented readers with a collection of moral **allegories** stressing the evils of pride, selfishness, and secret guilt among puritanical New Englanders. He brought these themes to fruition in his novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), in which adulteress Hester Prynne overcomes shame to gain redemption while her secret lover, Puritan minister Arthur Dimmesdale, is destroyed by his hidden sins.

### Culture Among Workers and Slaves

Most genteel people in the antebellum era would have denied that working people, whether the wage-earning immigrants in northern cities or slaves in the South, had a “culture.” But each of these groups crafted viable cultures that suited their living and working conditions and were distinct from the genteel culture of their owners or supervisors.

Wretched living conditions and dispiriting poverty encouraged working-class people in northern cities to choose social and cultural outlets that were very different from those of upper- and middle-class Americans. Drinking alcohol offered temporary relief from unpleasant conditions and was the social distraction of choice among working people. Whiskey and gin were cheap and readily available as western farmers used the new roads and canals to ship distilled spirits to urban markets. In the 1830s, consumers could purchase a gallon of whiskey for 25 cents.

Even activities that did not center on drinking tended to involve it. While genteel and middle-class people remained in their private homes reading Sigourney or Hawthorne, working people attended popular theaters cheering entertainments designed to appeal to their less-polished tastes. **Minstrel shows** featured fast-paced music and raucous comedy. Plays, such as Benjamin Baker’s *A Glance at New York in 1848*, presented caricatures

**allegory** A story in which characters and events stand for abstract ideas and suggest a deep, symbolic meaning.

**minstrel show** A variety show in which white actors made up as blacks presented jokes, songs, dances, and comic skits.

of working-class “Bowery B’hoys” and “G’hals” and of the well-off Broadway “pumpkins” they poked fun at. To put the audience in the proper mood, theater owners sold cheap drinks in the lobby or in basement pubs. Alcohol was also sold at sporting events that drew large, working-class audiences—bare-knuckle boxing contests, for instance, where the fighting was seldom confined to the boxing ring.

Stinging from their low status in the urbanizing and industrializing society, angry about living in hovels, and freed from inhibitions by hours of drinking, otherwise rational workingmen often resorted to riots that pitted Protestants against Catholics, immigrants against the native-born, and whites against blacks. Notable ethnic riots shook New York, Philadelphia, and Boston during the late 1820s and 1830s. In 1834, for example, rumors began circulating in Boston that innocent girls were being held captive and tortured in a Catholic convent in nearby Charlestown. A Protestant mob stormed the building, leaving it a heap of smoldering ashes. The ethnic tension evident in these and other riots was the direct result of declining economic power and terrible living conditions—and worker desperation. Native-born journeymen blamed immigrants for lowered wages and loss of status. Immigrants simmered with hatred at being treated like dirt by their native-born coworkers.

Working-class women experienced the same dull but dangerous working conditions and dismal living circumstances as working-class men, but their lives were even harder. Single women were particularly bad off. They were paid significantly less than men but had to pay as much, and sometimes more, for living quarters, food, and clothing. Marriage could reduce a woman’s personal expenses—but at a cost. While men congregated in the barbershop or candy store drinking and socializing during their leisure hours, married women were stuck in tiny apartments caring for children and doing household chores.

Like their northern counterparts, slaves fashioned for themselves a culture that helped them to survive and to maintain their humanity under dehumanizing conditions. The degree to which African practices endured in America is remarkable, yet what evolved was a truly unique African American culture.

Traces of African heritage were visible in slaves’ clothing, entertainment, and folkways. Often the plain garments that masters provided were upgraded with colorful head-scarves and other decorations similar to ornaments worn in Africa. Hairstyles often resembled those characteristic of African tribes. Music, dancing, and other forms of public entertainment and celebration also showed strong African roots. Musical instruments were copies of traditional ones, modified only by the use of New World materials. Stories told around the stoves at night were a New World adaptation of African **trickster tales**. Other links to Africa abounded. Healers among the slaves used African ceremonies, Christian rituals, and both imported and native herbs to effect cures. Taken together, these survivals and adaptations of African traditions provided a strong base underlying a solid African American culture.

Abiding family ties helped to make this cultural continuity possible. Slave families endured despite kinship ties made fragile by their highly precarious life. Children could be taken away from their parents, and husbands separated from their wives at the whim of masters. And anyone might be sold at any time. Families that remained intact, however, remained stable. When families did suffer separation, the **extended family** of grandparents and other relatives offered emotional support and helped maintain some sense of continuity. Another African legacy, the concept of fictive kinship, turned the whole community of slaves into a vast network of aunts and uncles, thereby also contributing to family stability.

**trickster tales** Stories that feature as a central character a clever figure who uses his wits and instincts to adapt to changing times; a survivor, the trickster is used by traditional societies, including African cultures, to teach important cultural lessons.

**extended family** A family group consisting of various close relatives as well as the parents and children.

Within families, the separation of work along age and gender lines followed traditional patterns. Slave women, when not laboring at the assigned tasks of plantation work, generally performed domestic duties and tended children, while the men hunted, fished, did carpentry, and performed other “manly” tasks. Children were likely to help out by tending family gardens and doing other light work until they were old enough to join their parents in the fields or learn skilled trades.

Slaves’ religion, like family structure, was another means for preserving unique African American traits. White churches virtually ignored the religious needs of slaves before the mid-eighteenth century. During the Great Awakening, however, many white evangelicals turned their attention to the spiritual life of slaves. In the face of slaveowners’ negligence, evangelical Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists took it upon themselves to carry the Christian message to the enslaved.

Although the designation “Baptist” or “Methodist” would suggest that the Christianity practiced by slaves resembled the religion practiced by southern whites, it differed in significant ways. Slave preachers untrained in white theology often equated Christian and African religious figures, creating unique African American religious symbols. Ceremonies combined African practices such as group dancing with Christian prayer. The merging of African musical forms with Christian lyrics gave rise to a new form of Christian music: the **spiritual**. Masters often encouraged such worship, thinking that the Christian emphasis on obedience and meekness would make slaves more productive and more peaceful servants. Some, however, discouraged religion among their slaves, fearing that large congregations of slaves might be moved to rebellion. Thus some religious slaves had to meet in secret to practice their own particular form of Christianity.

**spiritual** A religious folk song originated by African Americans, often expressing a longing for deliverance from the constraints and hardships of their lives.

**utopian** Idealistic reform sentiment based on the belief that a perfect society can be created on Earth and that a particular group or leader has the knowledge to actually create such a society.

**New Harmony** Utopian community that Robert Owen established in Indiana in 1825; economic problems and discord among members led to its failure two years later.

**Frances (Fanny) Wright** Infamous nineteenth-century woman who advocated what at the time were considered radical causes, including racial equality, equality for women, birth control, and open sexuality.

**Brook Farm** An experimental farm based on cooperative living; established in 1841, it first attracted transcendentalists and then serious farmers before fire destroyed it in 1845.

**socialist** Practicing socialism, the public ownership of manufacturing, farming, and other forms of production so that they benefit society rather than produce individual or corporate profits.

### Radical Attempts to Regain Community

To many people of all classes, society seemed to be spinning out of control as modernization rearranged basic lifestyles during the antebellum period. Some religious groups and social thinkers tried to ward off the excesses of Jacksonian individualism by forming **utopian** communities that experimented with various living arrangements and ideological commitments. They hoped to strike a new balance between self-sufficiency and community support.

A wealthy Welsh industrialist, Robert Owen, began one of the earliest experiments along these lines. In 1825 he purchased a tract of land on the Wabash River in Indiana called **New Harmony**. Believing that the solution to poverty in modern society was to collect the unemployed into self-contained and self-supporting villages, Owen opened a textile factory in which ownership was held communally by the workers and decisions were made by group consensus. Even though the community instituted innovations like an eight-hour workday, cultural activities for workers, and the nation’s first school offering equal education to boys and girls, New Harmony did not succeed. Owen was an outspoken critic of organized religion and joined his close associate **Frances (Fanny) Wright** in advocating radical causes. These leanings made the Owenites unpopular with more traditional Americans, and when their mill experienced economic hardship in 1827, New Harmony collapsed.

A more famous experiment, **Brook Farm**, had its origin in the transcendentalist movement but later flirted with **socialistic** ideas like those practiced at New Harmony. The brainchild of George Ripley, Brook Farm was designed to “prepare a society of liberal, intelligent and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more wholesome and simple life than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.” Most of Brook Farm’s supporters were transcendentalist celebrities such

as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Rather than living and working at the site as Ripley had hoped they would, most just dropped in from time to time. Disappointed, in 1844 Ripley adopted a new constitution based on the socialist ideas of Frenchman Charles Fourier. **Fourierism** emphasized community self-sufficiency, the equal sharing of earnings among members of the community, and the periodic redistribution of tasks and status to prevent boredom and elitism. With this new disciplined ideology in place, Brook Farm began to appeal to serious artisans and farmers, but a disastrous fire in 1845 cut the experiment short. Nearly a hundred other Fourierist communities across the country were also founded during this period, and although none achieved Brook Farm's notoriety, all shared the same unsuccessful fate.

Some communal experiments were grounded in various religious beliefs. The **Oneida Community**, established in central New York in 1848, for example, reflected the notions of its founder, John Humphrey Noyes. Although Noyes was educated in theology at Yale, he could find no church willing to ordain him because of his belief that his followers could escape sin through faith in God, communal living, and group marriage. Unlike Brook Farm and New Harmony, the Oneida Community was very successful financially, establishing thriving logging, farming, and manufacturing businesses. It was finally dissolved as the result of local pressures directed at the "free love" practiced by its members.

### A Second Great Awakening

Beginning in the 1790s, both theologians and popular preachers sought to create a new Protestant creed that would maintain the notion of Christian community in an atmosphere of increasing individualism and competition. Mirroring tendencies in the political and economic realms, Protestant thinking during the opening decades of the nineteenth century emphasized the role of the individual. Preachers such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield had moved in this direction during the Great Awakening of the 1740s, but many Protestant theologians continued to share the conviction that salvation was a gift from God that individuals could do nothing to earn. Timothy Dwight, Jonathan Edwards's grandson, took the first step toward liberalizing this position in the 1790s, but it fell to his students at Yale, especially Nathaniel Taylor, to create a new theology that was entirely consistent with the prevailing secular creed of individualism. According to this new doctrine, God offers salvation to all, but it is the individual's responsibility to seek it. The individual has "free will" to choose or not choose salvation. Taylor's ideas struck a responsive chord in a restless and expanding America. Hundreds of ordained ministers, licensed preachers, and **lay exhorters** carried the message of individual empowerment to an anxious populace.

Unlike Calvinist Puritanism, which characterized women as the weaker sex, the new evangelicalism stressed women's spiritual equality with—and even spiritual superiority to—men. Not surprisingly, young women generally were the first to respond to the new message: during the 1820s and 1830s, women often outnumbered men by two to one in new evangelical congregations. The most highly effective preachers of the day took advantage of this appeal, turning women into agents who then would spread the word to their husbands, brothers, and children.

Charles Grandison Finney was one of the most effective among the new generation of preachers. Finney, a former schoolteacher and lawyer, experienced a soul-shattering religious conversion in 1821. Declaring that "the Lord Jesus Christ" had retained him "to plead his cause," Finney performed on the pulpit as a spirited attorney might argue a case in court. Seating those most likely to be converted on a special "anxious bench,"

**Fourierism** Social system advanced by Frenchman Charles Fourier, who argued that people were capable of living in perfect harmony under the right conditions, which included communal life and republican government.

**Oneida Community** A religious community established in central New York in 1848; its members shared property, practiced group marriage, and reared children under communal care.

**lay exhorter** A church member who preaches but is not an ordained minister.



Revival meetings were remarkable affairs. Often lasting several days, they drew huge crowds who might listen to as many as forty preachers in around-the-clock sessions. The impact on the audience frequently was dramatic: one attendee at a New York revival commented that there were “loud ejaculations of prayer . . . some struck with terror . . . others, trembling weeping and crying out . . . fainting and swooning away.” *Camp Meeting* (colour litho), Rider, Alexander (19th century) (after) / ? Collection of the New-York Historical Society, USA/The Bridgeman Art Library.

**Second Great Awakening** An upsurge in religious fervor that began around 1800 and was characterized by revival meetings.

Finney focused on them as a lawyer might a jury. The result was likely to be dramatic. Many of the targeted people fainted, experienced bodily spasms, or cried out in hysteria. Such dramatic presentations and results brought Finney enormous publicity, which he and an army of imitators used to gain access to communities all over the West and Northeast. The result was a nearly continuous season of religious revival. The **Second Great Awakening** spread from rural community to rural community like a wildfire until, in the late 1830s, Finney carried the fire into Boston and New York City.

Even though religious conversion had become an individual matter and competition for tithes a genuine concern, revivalists did not ignore the notion of community. “I know this is all algebra to those who have never felt it,” Finney said. “But to those who have experienced the agony of wrestling, prevailing prayer, for the conversion of a soul, you may depend on it, that soul . . . appears as dear as a child is to the mother who brought it forth with pain.” This intimate connection forged bonds of mutual responsibility, giving a generation of isolated individuals something to rally around, a common starting point for joint action.

### The Middle Class and Moral Reform

The missionary activism that accompanied the Second Great Awakening dovetailed with a reforming inclination among genteel and middle-class Americans; witnessing the squalor and violence in working-class districts and the deteriorating condition for slaves led many to push for reforms. The **Christian benevolence** movement gave rise to hundreds of voluntary societies ranging from maternal associations designed to improve child rearing to political lobby groups aimed at outlawing alcohol, Sunday mail delivery, and other perceived evils. Such activism drew reformers together in common causes and led to deep friendships and a shared sense of commitment—antidotes to the alienation and loneliness common in the competitive world of the early nineteenth century.

The new theology reinforced the reforming impulse by emphasizing that even the most depraved might be saved if proper means were applied. This idea had immediate application in the realm of crime and punishment. Reformers characterized criminals not as evil but as lost and in need of divine guidance. In Auburn, New York, an experimental prison system put inmates to work during the day, condemned them to absolute silence during mealtimes, and locked them away in solitary confinement at night. Reformers believed that this combination of hard work, discipline, and solitude would put criminals on the path to productive lives and spiritual renewal.

Mental illness underwent a similar change in definition. Rather than viewing the mentally ill as hopeless cases doomed by an innate spiritual flaw, reformers now spoke of them as lost souls in need of help. **Dorothea Dix**, a young, compassionate, and reform-minded teacher, advocated publicly funded asylums for the insane. She told the Massachusetts state legislature in 1843: “I tell what I have seen. . . . Insane persons confined within the Commonwealth, in cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience!” For the balance of the century, Dix toured the country pleading the cause of the mentally ill, succeeding in winning both private and public support for mental health as well as general public health systems.

Many white-collar reformers acted in earnest and were genuinely interested in forging a new social welfare system. A number of their programs, however, seemed more like social control because they tried to force people to conform to a middle-class standard of behavior. For example, reformers believed that immigrants should willingly discard their traditional customs and beliefs and act like Americans. Immigrants who chose to cling to familiar ways were suspected of disloyalty. This aspect of benevolent reform was particularly prominent in two important movements: public education and **temperance**.

Before the War of 1812, most Americans believed that education was the family’s or the church’s responsibility and children were not required to attend school. But as the complexity of economic, political, and cultural life increased during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, **Horace Mann** and other champions of education pushed states to introduce formal public schooling. Like his contemporary Charles Grandison Finney, Mann was trained as a lawyer, but unlike Finney, he believed that ignorance, not sin, lay at the heart of the nation’s problems. When Massachusetts made Mann the superintendent of a state-wide board of education, he immediately extended the school year to a minimum of six months and gradually replaced classical learning with such practical courses as arithmetic, practical geography, and physical science.

But Mann and other reformers were interested in more than “knowledge”; they were equally concerned that new immigrants and the children of the urban poor be trained in Protestant values and middle-class habits. Thus the books used in public schools

**Christian benevolence** A tenet in some Christian theology teaching that the essence of God is self-sacrificing love and that the ultimate duty for Christians is to perform acts of kindness with no expectation of reward in return.

**Dorothea Dix** Philanthropist, reformer, and educator who was a pioneer in the movement for specialized treatment of the mentally ill.

**temperance** Moderation or abstinence in the consumption of alcoholic drinks.

**Horace Mann** Educator who called for publicly funded education for all children and was head of the first public board of education in the United States.

**parochial school** A school supported by a church parish; in the United States, the term usually refers to a Catholic school.

emphasized virtues such as promptness, perseverance, discipline, and obedience to authority. In Philadelphia and other cities where Roman Catholic immigrants concentrated, Catholic parents resisted the cultural pressure applied on their children by Protestant-dominated public school boards. They supported the establishment of **parochial schools**—a development that aggravated the strain between native-born Protestants and immigrant Catholics.

Another source of such tension was a Protestant crusade against alcohol. Drinking alcohol had always been common in America and before the early nineteenth century was not broadly perceived as a significant social problem. But during the 1820s and 1830s, three factors contributed to a new, more ominous perception: (1) the increasing visibility of drinking and its consequence, drunkenness, as populations became more concentrated in manufacturing and trading cities. In Rochester, New York, for example, a town that went through the throes of modernization in the late 1820s, anyone with a few cents could get a glass of whiskey at grocery stores, either of two candy stores, barbershops, or even private homes—all within a few steps of wherever a person might be. By 1829 this proliferation of public drinking led the county grand jury to conclude that strong drink was “the cause of almost all of the crime and almost all of the misery that flesh is heir to.”

(2) The second factor was alcohol’s economic impact in a new and more complex world of work. Factory owners and managers recognized that workers who drank often and heavily, on or off the job, threatened the quantity and quality of production. Owners and supervisors alike rallied around the temperance movement as a way of policing the undisciplined behavior of their employees, both in and out of the factory. By promoting temperance, these reformers believed they could clean up the worst aspects of city life and turn the raucous lower classes into clean-living, self-controlled, peaceful workers, increasing their productivity and business profits.

(3) The third factor that contributed to society’s changing view of alcohol was the institution of slavery, which also became a hot topic among the nation’s reborn Christians. In 1807, when Congress voted to outlaw permanently the importation of slaves in the following year, little had been said in defense of slavery as an institution. By the 1820s, public feeling about slavery was being reflected in the rise of the **American Colonization Society**, founded in 1816. Rooted in economic pragmatism, humanitarian concern for slaves’ well-being, and a belief that blacks were not equal to whites, this organization proposed that if slaveowners emancipated their slaves, or if funds could be raised to purchase their freedom, the freed slaves should immediately be shipped to Africa.

As the cotton kingdom exploded westward, however, and slavery grew and spread with it, Christians, including some white evangelicals, began to press for radical reforms. The most vocal leader among the antislavery forces was **William Lloyd Garrison**. In 1831 he founded the nation’s first prominent abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, in which he advocated immediate emancipation for African Americans, with no compensation for slaveholders. The following year, Garrison founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society and then, in 1833, branched out to found the national American Anti-Slavery Society.

At first, Garrison stood alone. Some Christian reformers joined his cause, but the majority held back. In eastern cities, workers fearful for their jobs lived in dread of either enslaved or free blacks flooding in, lowering wages, and destroying job security. In western states such as Indiana and Illinois, farmers feared that competition could arise from a slaveholding aristocracy. In both regions, white supremacists argued that the extension of slavery beyond the Mississippi River and north of the **Mason-Dixon Line** would eventually lead to blacks mixing with the white population, a possibility they found extremely distasteful. Thus most whites detested the notion of immediate emancipation,

#### **American Colonization Society**

Organization founded in 1816 to end slavery gradually by assisting individual slaveowners to liberate their slaves and then transporting them to Africa.

#### **William Lloyd Garrison**

Abolitionist leader who founded and published *The Liberator*, an antislavery newspaper.

**Mason-Dixon Line** The boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland; it marked the northern division between free and slave states before the Civil War.

and radical **abolitionists** at this early date were almost universally ignored or, worse, attacked when they denounced slavery. Throughout the 1830s, riots often accompanied abolitionist rallies, and angry mobs stormed stages and pulpits to silence abolitionist speakers. Still, support for the movement gradually grew. In 1836 petitions flooded into Congress demanding an end to the slave trade in Washington, D.C. Congress was not ready to engage in an action quite so controversial, but it did pass a **gag rule** that automatically **tabled** any petition to Congress that addressed the abolition of slavery. The rule remained in effect for nearly a decade.

Despite this official denial by the national Congress, a neglect shared by many state assemblies, not all governments remained closed to the discussion of slavery. In these state battles, a new group often led the fight against slavery: women.

Having earlier assumed the burden of eliminating sin from the world, many evangelical women became active in the antislavery cause. Moved by their activism, in 1840 Garrison proposed that a woman be elected to the executive committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Later that year women were members of Garrison's delegation to the first World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, but British antislavery advocates considered the presence of women inappropriate and refused to seat them.

One prominent female abolitionist, Angelina Grimké, gave voice to her contemporaries' frustration at such treatment: "Are we aliens, because we are women? Are we bereft of citizenship because we are mothers, wives and daughters of a mighty people? Have women no country . . . no partnership in a nation's guilt and shame?" In that same year, her sister Sarah went further, writing a powerful indictment against the treatment of women in America and a call for equality. "The page of history teems with woman's wrongs," Sarah proclaimed, and it is "wet with woman's tears." Women must, she added, "arise in all the majesty of moral power" and take their seats "on the platform of human rights, with man, to whom they were designed to be companions, equals and helpers in every good word and work."

Like Sarah Grimké, many other women backed away from male-dominated causes and began advancing their own cause. In 1848, two women who had been excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention, **Lucretia Mott** and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, called concerned women to a convention at Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss their common problems. At Seneca Falls, they presented a Declaration of Sentiments, a document drawn from natural rights theory as well as religious ideals. The convention adopted eleven resolutions relating to equality under the law, rights to control property, and other prominent gender issues. A twelfth resolution, calling for the right to vote, failed to receive unanimous endorsement.

### Free and Slave Labor Protests

Like the predominantly white and middle-class women who were founding female protest movements in America, some northern workers and southern slaves began to perceive their miseries not as the product of sin but of their exploitation by others. In view of their grim working and living conditions, it is not surprising that some manufacturing workers and slave laborers protested their situations and embraced increasingly active strategies for dealing with them.

The first organized labor strike in America took place in 1806, when a group of journeyman shoemakers stopped work to protest the hiring of unskilled workers to perform some tasks that higher-paid journeymen and apprentices had been doing. The strike failed when a New York court declared the shoemakers' actions illegal, but in the years to come many other journeymen's groups would try the same tactic. In large part they

**abolitionist** An individual who supported the immediate end to slavery, usually without compensations to slaveowners.

**gag rule** A rule that limits or prevents debate on an issue.

**table** Action taken by a legislative body (Congress, for example) to postpone debate on an issue until a positive vote to remove the topic from the table is taken.

**Lucretia Mott** Quaker minister who founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and co-organized the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention.

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton** Pioneering woman suffrage leader, co-organizer of the first Women's Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

# Investigating America

## The Declaration of Sentiments, 1848

Although Mott and Stanton had first discussed the idea of a convention to promote women's issues in 1840, the meeting was postponed until the summer of 1848 when Mott, a resident of Pennsylvania, visited Stanton at her home in Seneca Falls. Their original intent was to invite women only, but when a number of men, including the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, arrived at the Wesleyan Chapel for the conference, the organizers decided to admit all who wished to hear. The convention lasted two days, and before it adjourned, sixty-eight women and thirty-two men signed the Declaration of Sentiments, largely drafted by Stanton. The preamble reads in part:

.....

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a dissolution.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these

rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. ....

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

.....

- Why did Stanton adopt the language and structure of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence?
- Stanton's preamble, like Jefferson's document, was followed by a list of grievances, including being denied access to universities, the professions of "medicine, or law," and the "inalienable right to the elective franchise." All of these rights, Stanton observed, were granted to "the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners." To what extent did these demands reflect the race and class of the women who attended the conference?

 See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**trade unions** Labor organizations whose members work in a specific trade or craft.

**National Trades' Union** The first national association of trade unions in the United States; it was formed in 1834.

were reacting to the mechanization that threatened their jobs and their social position. Industrialization robbed them of their status as independent contractors, forcing many to become wage laborers, and they bemoaned their loss of power in having to accept set hours, conditions, and wages for the work they performed. Instead of attacking or even criticizing industrialization, however, journeymen simply asked for what they believed was their fair piece of the pie: decent wages and working conditions and some role in decision making. Throughout the industrializing cities of the Northeast and the smaller manufacturing centers of the West, journeymen banded together in **trade unions**: assemblies of skilled workers grouped by specific occupation. During the 1830s, trade unions from neighboring towns merged to form the beginnings of a national trade union movement. In this way, house carpenters, shoemakers, handloom weavers, printers, and comb makers established national unions through which they attempted to enforce uniform wage standards in their industries. In 1834, journeymen's organizations from a number of industries joined to form the **National Trades' Union**, the first labor organization in the nation's history to represent many different crafts.

Not surprisingly, factory owners, bankers, and others who had a vested interest in keeping labor cheap used every device available to prevent unions from gaining the upper hand. Employers countered the national trade unions by forming associations to resist union activity and used the courts to keep organized labor from disrupting business. Despite such efforts, a number of strikes affected American industries during the 1830s. In 1834 and again in 1836, women working in the textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts closed down production in the face of wage reductions and rising boarding house rates. Such demonstrations of power by workers frightened manufacturers, and gradually over the next two decades, employers replaced native-born women in the factories with immigrants, who were less liable to organize successfully and, more important, less likely to win sympathy from judges or consumers.

Still, workers won some small victories in the battle to organize. A significant breakthrough finally came in 1842 when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided in the case of *Commonwealth v. Hunt* that Boston's journeymen boot makers were within their rights to organize "in such manner as best to subserve their own interests" and to call strikes. By that time, however, economic changes had so undermined labor's ability to withstand the rigors of strikes and court cases that legal protection became somewhat meaningless. Not all labor protests were as peaceful as the shoemakers' strike. In 1828, for example, immigrant weavers protested the pitiful wages paid by Alexander Knox, New York City's leading textile employer. Storming Knox's home to demand higher pay, the weavers invaded and vandalized his house and beat Knox's son and a cordon of police guards. The rioters then marched to the garret and basement homes of weavers who had refused to join the protest and destroyed their looms.

Unlike workers in the North, who at least had some legal protections and civil rights, slaves had nothing but their own wits to protect them against a society that classed them as disposable personal property. Slaves were skilled at the use of **passive resistance**. The importance of passive resistance was evident in the folk tales and songs that circulated among slaves. Perhaps the best-known example is the stories of Br'er—that is, Brother—Rabbit, a classic trickster figure who uses deceit to get what he wants. Such stories taught slaves how to deal cleverly with powerful adversaries.

**passive resistance** Resistance by nonviolent methods.

Not all slave resistance was passive. Perhaps the most common form of active resistance was running away. The number of slaves who escaped may never be known, though some estimate that an average of about a thousand made their way to freedom each year. But running away was always a dangerous gamble. One former slave recalled, "No man who has never been placed in such a situation can comprehend the thousand obstacles thrown in the way of the flying slave. Every white man's hand is raised against him—the patrollers are watching for him—the hounds are ready to follow on his track."

The most frightening form of slave resistance was open and armed revolt. Despite slaveholders' best efforts, slaves planned an unknown number of rebellions during the antebellum period, and some of them were actually carried out. The most serious and violent of these uprisings was the work of a black preacher, Nat Turner. After years of planning and organization, in 1831 Turner led a force of about seventy slaves in a predawn raid against the slaveholding households in Southampton County, Virginia. It took four days for white forces to stop the assault. During that time, the slaves slaughtered and mutilated fifty-five white men, women, and children. Angry, terrified whites finally captured and executed Turner and sixteen of his followers.

In the wake of Nat Turner's Rebellion, fear of slave revolts reached paranoid levels in the South, especially in areas where slaves greatly outnumbered whites. After reading

No pictures of famed slave revolt leader Nat Turner are known to exist, but this nineteenth-century painting illustrates how one artist imagined the appearance of Turner and his fellow conspirators. White southerners lived in terror of scenes such as this and passed severe laws designed to prevent African Americans from ever having such meetings. The Granger Collection, New York.



about and seeing a play depicting a slave insurrection, Mary Boykin Chesnut gave expression to the fear that plagued whites in the slave South: “What a thrill of terror ran through me as those yellow and black brutes came jumping over the parapets! Their faces were like so many of the same sort at home. . . . How long would they resist the seductive and irresistible call: ‘Rise, kill, and be free!’”

Frightened and often outnumbered, whites felt justified in imposing stringent restrictions and using harsh methods to enforce them. Southern courts and legislatures clapped stricter controls on the freedoms granted to slaves and to free blacks. In most areas, free African Americans were denied the right to own guns, buy liquor, hold public assemblies, testify in court, and vote. Slaves were forbidden to own any private property, to attend unsupervised worship services, and to learn reading and writing. Also, codes that prevented slaves from being unsupervised in towns virtually eliminated slaves as independent urban craftsmen after 1840. In many areas of the South, white citizens formed local **vigilance committees**, bands of armed men who rode through the countryside to overawe slaves and dissuade them from attempting to escape or rebel. Local authorities pressed court clerks, ship captains, and other officials to limit the freedom of blacks. White critics of slavery—who had been numerous, vocal, and well respected before the birth of King Cotton—were harassed, prosecuted, and sometimes beaten into silence.

**vigilance committees** Groups of armed private citizens who use the threat of mob violence to enforce their own interpretation of the law.

## The Whig Alternative to Jacksonian Democracy

- ★ **What did Jackson's opponents hope to accomplish when they built their coalition to oppose the Democrats?**
- ★ **Did the coalition accomplish its purposes? Why or why not?**

The same fundamental structural changes that led to social and cultural transformations had an enormous impact on politics as well. Although Andrew Jackson was quite possibly the most popular president since George Washington, not all Americans agreed

with his philosophy, policies, or political style. As the Bank War illustrates, men like Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, who inherited the crumbling structure of Jefferson's Republican Party, continually opposed Jackson in and out of Congress but seemed unable to overcome sectional differences and culture wars enough to challenge Jackson's enormous national power. Gradually, however, anger over Jackson's policies and anxiety about change forged cooperation among the disenchanted, who coalesced into a new national party.

### The End of the Old Party Structure

The last full year of Jackson's first term in office, 1832, was a landmark year in the nation's political history. In the course of that single year, the Seminoles declared war on the United States, Jackson declared war on the Second Bank, South Carolina declared war on the binding power of the Constitution, and the Cherokees waged a continuing war in the courts to hold on to their lands. The presidential election that year reflected the air of political crisis.

Henry Clay had started the Bank War for the purpose of creating a political cause to rally Jackson's opponents. The problem was that Jackson's enemies were deeply divided among themselves. Clay opposed Jackson because the president refused to support the American System and used every tool at his disposal to attack Clay's economic policies. Southern politicians like Calhoun, however, feared and hated Clay's nationalistic policies as much as they did Jackson's assertions of federal power. And political outsiders distrusted all political organizations. The 1832 election underscored these divisions.

When the National Republicans met in their convention, they nominated Clay as their standard-bearer. The Republicans then issued the country's first formal **party platform**, a ringing document supporting Clay's economic ideas and attacking Jackson's use of the **spoils system**. Even though the Virginia-born Clay was a Kentucky planter, many southerners were put off by his nationalist philosophy and refused to support any of the candidates. They finally backed nullification advocate John Floyd of Virginia.

Lack of unity spelled disaster for Jackson's opponents, since Floyd received votes that might have gone to Clay. But even if Clay had gotten those votes, Jackson's popularity and the political machinery that he and Van Buren controlled would have given the victory to Jackson. The president was reelected with a total of 219 electoral votes to Clay's 49 and Floyd's 11. Jackson's party lost five seats in the Senate but gained six in the House of Representatives. Despite unsettling changes in the land and continuing political chaos, the people still wanted the hero of New Orleans as their leader.

### The New Political Coalition

If one lesson emerged clearly from the election of 1832, it was that Jackson's opponents needed to pull together if they expected to challenge the growing power of "King Andrew."

Imitating political organizations in Great Britain, Clay and his associates began calling Jackson supporters Tories—supporters of the king—and calling themselves Whigs. The antimonarchical label stuck, and the new party formed in 1834 was called the **Whig Party**.

The Whigs eventually absorbed all the major factions that opposed Jackson. At the heart of the party were Clay supporters: advocates of strong government and the American System in economics. The nullifiers in the South, however, quickly came around when Clay and Calhoun found themselves on the same side in defeating Jackson's appointment of Van Buren as American minister to England. This successful campaign, combined with Calhoun's growing awareness that Jackson was perhaps more dangerous to his constituents' interests than was Clay, led the southerner and his associates back

**party platform** A formal statement of the principles, policies, and promises on which a political party bases its appeal to the public.

**spoils system** System associated with American politics in which a political party, after winning an election, gives government jobs to its voters as a reward for working toward victory.

**Whig Party** Political party that came into being in 1834 as an anti-Jackson coalition and that charged "King Andrew" with executive tyranny.

into Clay's camp. A final major group to rally to the Whigs was the collection of Christian reformers whose campaigns to eliminate alcohol, violations of the Sabbath, and dozens of other perceived evils had become increasingly political during the opening years of the 1830s. Evangelicals disapproved of Jackson's personal lifestyle, his views on slavery, his Indian policy, and his refusal to involve government in their moral causes. The orderly and sober society that whiskey-drinking Clay and the Whigs envisioned appealed to such people.

The congressional elections in 1834 provided the first test for the new coalition. The Whigs won nearly 40 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives and more than 48 percent in the Senate. Clearly cooperation was paying off.

### Van Buren in the White House

Nearly 70 years old and plagued by various ailments, Old Hickory decided to follow Washington's example and not run for a third term. Instead, Jackson used all the power and patronage at his command to ensure that Martin Van Buren would win the presidential nomination at the Democratic Party convention.

If Jackson personified the popular charisma behind Democratic Party success, Van Buren personified its political machinery. His ability to create unlikely political alliances had earned him the nickname "the Little Magician." Throughout Jackson's first term, Van Buren had headed up the Kitchen Cabinet and increasingly became Jackson's chief political henchman. In 1832 Jackson had repaid Van Buren's loyalty by making him vice president, with the intention of launching him into the presidency.

Because the Whig Party represented so many diverse interests and ideologies, Clay and the party leaders decided to encourage each region's party organization to nominate its own candidates rather than holding a convention and thrashing out a platform. Whig leaders, especially the experienced political manipulator Thurlow Weed, hoped a large number of candidates would confuse voters and throw the election into the House of Representatives, where skillful political management and Van Buren's unpopularity might unseat the Democrats. As a result, three **favorite sons** ran on the Whig ticket: Daniel Webster of Massachusetts represented the industrial Northeast; Hugh Lawson White, a Tennessean and former Jackson supporter, spoke for the nullifiers in the South; and William Henry Harrison, former governor of Indiana Territory and victor at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, was tapped to represent the Northwest.

Weed underestimated the Democrats' hold on the minds of the voters. Van Buren captured 765,483 popular votes—more than Jackson had won in the previous election—but in the Electoral College he squeaked by with a winning margin of less than 1 percent. House Democrats lost thirty-seven seats to Whigs. In the Senate, however, Democrats increased their majority to more than 62 percent. Even with that slight edge, Van Buren could expect trouble getting Democratic policies through Congress. This handicap was worsened by a total collapse in the economy just weeks after he took office.

The **Panic of 1837** was a direct outcome of the Bank War and Jackson's money policies, but it was Van Buren who would take the blame. The crisis had begun with Nicholas Biddle's manipulation of credit and interest rates in an effort to discredit Jackson and have the Second Bank rechartered in spite of the president's veto. Jackson had added to the problem by removing paper money and credit from the economy in an effort to win support from hard-money advocates. Arguing that he wanted to end "the monopoly of the public lands in the hands of speculators and capitalists," Jackson had issued the **Specie Circular** on August 15, 1836. From that day forward, payment for public land had to be made in specie.

**favorite son** A candidate nominated for office by delegates from his or her own region or state.

**Panic of 1837** An economic collapse that came as the result of Andrew Jackson's fiscal policies and led to an extended national economic depression.

**Specie Circular** Order issued by President Jackson in 1836 stating that the federal government would accept only specie—gold and silver—as payment for public land; one of the causes of the Panic of 1837.

The contraction in credit and currency had the same impact in 1836 as it had in 1819: the national economy collapsed. Unable to pay back or collect loans, buy raw materials, or conduct any other sort of commerce, hundreds of businesses, plantations, farms, factories, canals, and other enterprises spiraled into bankruptcy by the end of the year, throwing more than a third of the population out of work. Trying to address the problems, President Van Buren first extended Jackson's hard-money policy, which caused the economy to contract further. Next, in an effort to keep the government solvent, Van Buren cut federal spending to the bone, shrinking the money supply even more. Then, to replace the stabilizing influence lost when the Second Bank was destroyed, he created a national treasury system endowed with many of the powers formerly wielded by the bank. The new regional treasury offices accepted only specie in payment for federal lands and other obligations and used that specie to pay federal expenses and debts. As a result, specie was sucked out of local banks and local economies. Van Buren's decisions, although fiscally sound by the wisdom of the day, only made matters worse for the average person and drove the last nail into his political coffin.

### The Log-Cabin and Hard-Cider Campaign of 1840

The Whigs had learned in 1836 that only a unified party could possibly destroy the political machine built by Jackson and Van Buren. As the nation sank into depression, the Whigs lined up behind a single candidate for the 1840 election, determined to use whatever means were necessary to break the Democrats' grip on the voters.

Once again, Henry Clay hoped to be the party's nominee, but Thurlow Weed convinced the party that Harrison would have a better chance in the election. Weed chose Harrison because of his distinguished military record and because the general, who had been a political lion thirty years earlier, had been out of the public eye for a long time and had few enemies left. For Harrison's running mate, the party chose **John Tyler**, a Virginia senator who had bolted from Jackson's Democratic Party during the nullification crisis. Weed clearly hoped that the Virginian would draw votes from the planter South while Harrison carried the West and North.

Although the economy was in bad shape, the Whig campaign avoided addressing any serious issues. Instead, the Whigs launched a smear campaign against Van Buren. Although he was the son of a tavern keeper, the Whig press portrayed him as an aristocrat whose expensive tastes in clothes, food, and furniture were signs of dangerous excess during an economic depression. Harrison really was a prosperous farmer and officer, but the Whigs characterized him as a simple frontiersman—a Natty Bumppo—who had risen to greatness through his own efforts. Whig claims were so extravagant that the Democratic press soon satirized Harrison in political cartoons showing a rustic hick swilling hard cider. The satire backfired. Whig newspapers and speechmakers seized on the image and sold Harrison, the longtime political insider, as a simple man of the people who truly lived in a log cabin.

**John Tyler** Virginia senator who left the Democratic Party after conflicts with Andrew Jackson; he was elected vice president in 1840 and became president when William Henry Harrison died in office.

## The Triumph of Manifest Destiny

- ★ **What forces in American life contributed to the concept of manifest destiny?**
- ★ **To what extent did the actions taken by American settlers in Oregon and Texas reflect the ideal of manifest destiny?**

The key to Harrison's success was the Whig Party's skillful manipulation of the former general's reputation as a frontiersman and popular advocate for westward expansion. The allure of the west—and the nationalistic appeals of seizing and occupying it—brought an

air of excitement to political discussion. It was this allure that helped to draw out the thousands of new voters in 1840 and would provide a new basis for political cooperation and contention in the years to come.

### The Rise of Manifest Destiny

The new spirit that came to life in American politics and rhetoric in the years after 1840 found expression in a single term: Manifest Destiny. To some extent, manifest destiny can

be traced back to the sense of mission that had motivated colonial Puritans. Like John Winthrop and his Massachusetts Bay associates, many early-nineteenth-century Americans believed they had a duty to march into new lands. During the antebellum period, romantic nationalism, land hunger, and the evangelicism of the Second Great Awakening shaped this sense of divine mission into a new and powerful commitment to westward expansion. Many concluded that the westward movement was not just an economic process but was part of a divine plan for North America and the world.

Not surprisingly, the earliest and most aggressive proponents of expansion were Christian missionary organizations, whose many magazines, newsletters, and reports were the first to give it formal voice. Politicians, however, were not far behind. Democratic warhorse and expansion advocate Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri borrowed both the tone and content of missionary rhetoric in his speeches promoting generous land policies, territorial acquisition, and even overseas expansion. In 1825, Benton argued in favor of American colonization of the Pacific coast and of the world, bringing “great and wonderful benefits” to the western Indians and allowing “science, liberal principles in government, and true religion [to] cast their lights across the intervening sea.”

### Expansion to the North and West

One major complication standing in the way of the nation’s perceived manifest destiny was the fact that Spain, Britain, Russia, and other countries already owned large parts of the continent. This was particularly true in the case of the

**Oregon Question.** The vast Oregon tract had been claimed, at one time or another, by Spain, Russia, France, England, and the United States. By the 1820s, only England and the United States continued to contest for its ownership (see Map 12.1). At the close of the War of 1812, the two countries had been unable to settle their claims, and in 1818 had agreed to joint occupation of Oregon for ten years. They extended this arrangement indefinitely in 1827, with the **proviso** that either country could end it with one year’s notice.

Oregon’s status as neither British nor American presented its occupants with an unstable situation in which the Oregon Country had no laws. In 1841 settlers created a **probate court**, instructing it to follow the statutes of the state of New York, and appointed a committee to frame a constitution and draft a basic code of laws. Opposition from the British put an end to this early effort at self-rule, but the movement continued. Two years later, Americans in Oregon began agitating again, this time because of wolves preying on their livestock. They held a series of “Wolf Meetings” in 1843 to discuss joint protection and resolved to create a civil government. Although the British tried to prevent it, the assembly passed the **First Organic Laws** of Oregon on July 5, 1843, making Oregon an independent republic in all but name. Independence, however, was not the settlers’ long-term goal. The document’s preamble announced that the code of laws would continue in force “until such time as the United States of America extend their jurisdiction over us.”

**Oregon Question** The question of the national ownership of the Pacific Northwest; the United States and England renegotiated the boundary in 1846, establishing it at 49° north latitude.

**proviso** A clause making a qualification, condition, or restriction in a document.

**probate court** A court that establishes the validity of wills and administers the estates of people who have died.

**First Organic Laws** A constitution adopted by American settlers in the Oregon Country on July 5, 1843, establishing a government independent from Great Britain and requesting annexation by the United States.



**MAP 12.1** Oregon Territory

This map shows the changing boundaries and shifting possession of the Oregon Country. As a result of Polk's aggressive stance and economic pressures, Britain ceded all land south of the 49th parallel to the United States in 1846.

### Revolution in Texas

Similar problems faced American settlers who had taken up residence in territories of Spain, and then of Mexico, in the Southwest. Although the Spanish and then the Mexican government had invited Anglo-Americans to settle in the region,

these pioneers generally ignored Mexican customs, including their pledge to practice Roman Catholicism, and often disregarded Mexican law. This was particularly the case after 1829, when Mexico began attaching duties to trade items moving between the region and the neighboring United States. Mexico also abolished importing slaves. Bad feelings grew over the years, but the distant and politically unstable Mexican government could do little to enforce laws, customs, or faith. In addition, despite the friction between cultures in Texas, many Tejanos were disturbed by the corruption and political instability in Mexico City and were as eager as their Texian counterparts to participate in the United States' thriving cotton market.

Assuming responsibility for forging a peaceful settlement to the problems between settlers in Texas and the Mexican government, Stephen F. Austin went to Mexico City in 1833. While Austin was there, **Antonio López de Santa Anna** seized power after a series of revolutions and disputed elections. A former supporter of federalism and a key figure in the adoption of a republican constitution in 1824, Santa Anna had come to the conclusion that Mexico was not ready for democracy. Upon assuming power, he suspended the constitution and dismissed congress. When Santa Anna made it clear that he intended to exert his authority over Texas, Stephen Austin declared, "War is our only

### Antonio López de Santa Anna

Mexican general who was president of Mexico when he led an attack on the Alamo in 1836; he again led Mexico during its war with the United States in 1846–1848.

recourse.” He was immediately made chairman of a committee to call for a convention of delegates from all over Texas. Members of the group that convened referred to themselves as the “Consultation.”

Angered by the rebellion, Santa Anna personally led the Mexican army into Texas to quell the **Texas Revolution**, arriving in San Antonio on February 23, 1836. Knowing that Santa Anna was on his way, Texas commander William Travis moved his troops into the **Alamo**. On March 6, Santa Anna ordered an all-out assault, and despite sustaining staggering casualties, was able to capture the former mission. Most of the post’s defenders were killed in the assault, and Santa Anna executed those who survived the battle, including former American congressman and frontier celebrity Davy Crockett.

Despite the loss at the Alamo, Texans continued to underestimate Santa Anna’s strength and his resolve to put down the rebellion. After a series of defeats, however, the Texans, under the command of revolutionary **Sam Houston**, scored a stunning victory on April 21 at the San Jacinto River. Disguised in a private’s uniform, Santa Anna attempted to escape but was captured and brought to Houston, who promised to release him in exchange for his officially recognizing Texas’s independence and acknowledging the Rio Grande as the border between Texas and Mexico. Santa Anna agreed, signing the **Treaty of Velasco** on May 14, 1836.

As in Oregon, many leaders in Texas hoped their actions would lead to swift annexation by the United States. In 1838 Houston, by then president of the Republic of Texas, invited the United States to annex Texas. Because all of Texas lay below the Missouri Compromise line, John Quincy Adams, now a member of the House of Representatives, **filibustered** for three weeks against the acquisition of such a massive block of potential slave territory. Bedeviled with the Panic of 1837, Van Buren declined to push for annexation. For the next nine years, Texas remained an independent republic.

### The Politics of Manifest Destiny

Although Adams was typical of one wing of the Whig coalition, he certainly did not speak for the majority of Whigs on the topic of national expansion. The party of manufacturing, revivalism, and social reform inclined naturally toward the blending of political, economic, and religious evangelicalism that was manifest destiny. And when Harrison died soon after taking office in 1841, his vice president, John Tyler, picked up the torch of American expansionism.

Tyler was a less typical Whig than even Adams. A Virginian and a states’ rights advocate, he had been a staunch Democrat until the nullification crisis, when he bolted the party to protest Jackson’s strong assertion of federal power. As president, Tyler seemed still to be more Democrat than Whig. He vetoed high protective tariffs, internal improvement bills that he perceived as unnecessary, and attempts to revive the Second Bank of the United States. In fact, during Tyler’s administration, Whigs accomplished only two moderate goals: they eliminated Van Buren’s hated treasury system, and they passed a slightly higher tariff. Tyler’s refusal to promote Whig economic policies led to a general crisis in government in 1843, when his entire cabinet resigned over his veto of a bank bill.

Tyler did share his party’s desire for expansion, however. He assigned his secretary of state, Daniel Webster, to negotiate a treaty with Britain to settle a dispute over the border between Maine and Canada. The resulting **Webster-Ashburton Treaty** (1842) finally established the nation’s northeastern border. Tyler also pushed a forceful policy toward Texas and the Southwest. With Sam Houston repeating his invitation for the United States to annex Texas, negotiations between Houston’s representatives and

**Texas Revolution** A revolt by American colonists in Texas against Mexican rule; it began in 1835 and ended with the establishment of the Republic of Texas in 1836.

**Alamo** A fortified Franciscan mission at San Antonio; rebellious Texas colonists were besieged and annihilated there by Santa Anna’s forces in 1836.

**Sam Houston** American general and politician who fought in the struggle for Texas’s independence from Mexico and became president of the Republic of Texas.

**Treaty of Velasco** Treaty that Santa Anna signed in May 1836 after his capture at the San Jacinto River; it recognized the Republic of Texas but was later rejected by the Mexican congress.

**filibuster** To use obstructionist tactics, especially prolonged speechmaking, in order to delay legislative action.

**Webster-Ashburton Treaty** Treaty that in 1842 established the present border between Canada and northeastern Maine.

Tyler's secretary of state—now John C. Calhoun—led to a treaty of annexation on April 11, 1844. In line with the Treaty of Velasco, the annexation document named the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of Texas. Annexation remained a major arguing point between proslavery and antislavery forces, however, and the treaty failed ratification in the Senate. The issue of Texas annexation then joined the Oregon Question as a major campaign issue in the presidential election of 1844.

### Expansion and the Election of 1844

As the Whigs and the Democrats geared up for a national election, it became clear that expansion would be the key issue. This put the two leading political figures of the day, Democrat Martin Van Buren and Whig Henry Clay, in an uncomfortable position. Van Buren was on record as opposing the extension of slavery and was therefore against the annexation of Texas. Clay, the architect of the American System, was opposed to any form of uncontrolled expansion, especially if it meant fanning sectional tensions, and he too opposed immediate annexation of Texas. Approaching the election, both issued statements to the effect that they would back annexation only with Mexico's consent.

Despite Clay's ambiguous stance on expansion, President Tyler's constant refusal to support the larger Whig political agenda led the party to nominate Clay anyway. Van Buren was not so lucky. The strong southern wing of the Democratic Party was so put off by Van Buren's position on slavery that it blocked him, securing the nomination of Tennessee congressman **James K. Polk**.

The Democrats based their platform on the issues surrounding Oregon and Texas. They implied that the regions rightfully belonged to the United States, stating “that the *re-occupation* of Oregon and the *reannexation* of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures,” a position that implied Texas had wrongly been transferred to Spain in the Adams-Onis Treaty. The Democrats played up both regions to appeal to the manifest destiny sentiments of both northerners and southerners. For his part, Clay continued to waffle on expansionism, emphasizing economic policies instead.

The election demonstrated the people's commitment to manifest destiny. Clay was a national figure, well respected and regarded as one of the nation's leading statesmen, whereas Polk was barely known outside Tennessee. Still, Polk polled forty thousand more popular votes than Clay and garnered sixty-five more electoral votes. Seeing the election as a political barometer, outgoing president Tyler prepared a special message to Congress in December 1844 proposing a **joint resolution** annexing Texas. Many congressmen who had opposed annexation could not ignore the clear mandate given to manifest destiny in the presidential election, and the bill to annex Texas passed in February 1845, just as Tyler prepared to turn the White House over to his Democratic successor.

Holding to the position he had taken prior to the election, Polk asked Congress to end the joint occupation of Oregon in his annual message for 1845. Twisting the largely forgotten Monroe Doctrine, the president insisted that no nation other than the United States should be permitted to occupy any part of North America and urged Congress to assert exclusive control over the Oregon Country even if doing so meant war.

Neither the United States nor Britain intended to go to war over Oregon. The only issue—where the border would be—was a matter for the bargaining table, not the battlefield. Polk insisted on 54°40'. The British lobbied for the Columbia River as the boundary, but their position softened quickly. The fur trade along the Columbia was in rapid decline and had become unprofitable by the early 1840s. As a result, in the spring of

#### James K. Polk Tennessee

congressman who was a leader of the Democratic Party and the dark-horse winner of the presidential campaign in 1844.

**joint resolution** A formal statement adopted by both houses of Congress and subject to approval by the president; if approved, it has the force of law.

1846, the British foreign secretary offered Polk a compromise boundary at the 49th parallel. The Senate recommended that Polk accept the offer, and a treaty settling the Oregon Question was ratified on June 15, 1846.

### The War with Mexico and Sectional Crisis

Although the nation's border issues were now settled from Congress's point of view, the joint resolution annexing Texas and establishing the Rio Grande as its southern border led Mexico's popular press to demand an end to diplomatic relations with the United States. The government did so immediately, threatening war. Polk added to the tension, and appeared to confirm Mexican fears, by declaring that the entire Southwest should be annexed.

Late in 1845, the president dispatched John Slidell to Mexico City to negotiate the boundary dispute. He also authorized Slidell to purchase New Mexico and California if possible. At the same time, Polk dispatched American troops to Louisiana, ready to strike if Mexico resisted Slidell's offers. He also notified Americans in California that if war broke out with Mexico, the Pacific fleet would seize California ports and support an insurrection against Mexican authority.

Nervous but bristling over what seemed to be preparations for war, the Mexican government refused to receive Slidell; in January 1846 he sent word to the president that his mission was a failure. Polk then ordered **Zachary Taylor** to lead troops from New Orleans toward the Rio Grande into a disputed zone that had never been part of Mexican Texas. Shortly thereafter, an American military party led by **John C. Frémont** entered California's Salinas Valley. Reaching an end to its patience, on April 22 Mexico proclaimed that its territory had been violated by the United States and declared war. Two days later, Mexican troops engaged a detachment of Taylor's army at Matamoros on the Rio Grande, killing eleven and capturing the rest. When news of the battle reached Washington, Polk immediately called for war. Although the nation was far from united on the issue, Congress agreed on May 13, 1846 (see Map 12.2).

The outbreak of war disturbed many Americans. In New England, for example, protest ran high. Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau chose to be jailed rather than pay taxes that would support the war. It was not expansion as such that troubled Thoreau, but the connection between Texas annexation and slavery. To southerners, the broad stretch of land lying south of  $36^{\circ}30'$  (the Missouri Compromise line) represented both economic and political power: the adoption of proslavery constitutions in newly acquired territories would strengthen the South's economic and political interests in Congress. Northerners were perturbed by these implications but saw something even more alarming in the southern expansion movement. Since the Missouri Compromise (1820), some northerners had come to believe that a slaveholding **oligarchy** controlled life and politics in the South. Abolitionists warned that this "Slave Power" sought to expand its reach until it controlled every aspect of American life. Many viewed Congress's adoption of the gag rule in 1836 and the drive to annex Texas as evidence of the Slave Power's influence. Debates over Texas pitted two regions of the country against each other in what champions of both sides regarded as mortal combat.

Serious political combat began in August 1846 when David Wilmot, a Democratic representative from Pennsylvania, proposed an amendment to a military appropriations bill specifying that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in any territory gained in the War with Mexico. The **Wilmot Proviso** passed in the House of Representatives but failed in the Senate, where equal state representation gave the South a stronger position. At Polk's request, Wilmot refused to propose his proviso when the

**Zachary Taylor** American general whose defeat of Santa Anna at Buena Vista in 1847 made him a national hero and the Whig choice for president in 1848.

**John C. Frémont** Explorer, soldier, and politician who explored and mapped much of the American West and Northwest; he later ran unsuccessfully for president.

**oligarchy** A small group of people or families who hold power.

**Wilmot Proviso** Amendment to an appropriations bill in 1846 proposing that any territory acquired from Mexico be closed to slavery; it was defeated in the Senate.

# Investigating America

## James K. Polk's War Message to Congress, 1846

President Polk and his secretary of state, James Buchanan, had nearly finished drafting a war message to Congress when word arrived in Washington that fighting had begun near the Rio Grande. After spending Sunday morning at church, Polk revised the message, which, following nineteenth-century tradition, he submitted rather than read to Congress. It read in part:

.....  
**T**he strong desire to establish peace with Mexico on liberal and honorable terms, and the readiness of this Government to regulate and adjust our boundary and other causes of difference with that power on such fair and equitable principles as would lead to permanent relations of the most friendly nature, induced me in September last to seek the reopening of diplomatic relations between the two countries. . . . An envoy of the United States repaired to Mexico with full powers to adjust every existing difference. But though present on the Mexican soil by agreement between the two Governments, invested with full powers, and bearing evidence of the most friendly dispositions, his mission has been unavailing. The Mexican Government not only refused to receive him or listen to his propositions, but after a long-continued series of menaces have at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on our own soil. . . .

Meantime Texas, by the final action of our Congress, had become an integral part of our Union. The Congress of Texas, by its act of December 19, 1836, had declared the Rio del Norte [the Rio Grande] to be the boundary of that Republic. Its jurisdiction had been extended and exercised beyond the Nueces [River]. The country between that river and the Del Norte had been represented in the Congress and in the convention of Texas, had thus taken part in the act of annexation itself, and is now included within one of our Congressional districts. Our own Congress had, moreover, with great unanimity, by the act approved December 31, 1845, recognized the country beyond the Nueces as a part of our territory . . . Accordingly, on the 13th of January last

instructions were issued to the general [Taylor] in command of these troops to occupy the left bank of the Del Norte. This river, which is the southwestern boundary of the State of Texas, is an exposed frontier. From this quarter invasion was threatened. . . .

The Mexican forces at Matamoras assumed a belligerent attitude, and on the 12th of April General Ampudia, then in command, notified General Taylor to break up his camp within twenty-four hours and to retire beyond the Nueces River, and in the event of his failure to comply with these demands announced that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question. But no open act of hostility was committed until the 24th of April. On that day General Arista, who had succeeded to the command of the Mexican forces, communicated to General Taylor that "he considered hostilities commenced and should prosecute them." A party of dragoons of 63 men and officers were on the same day dispatched from the American camp up the Rio del Norte, on its left bank, to ascertain whether the Mexican troops had crossed or were preparing to cross the river, "became engaged with a large body of these troops, and after a short affair, in which some 16 were killed and wounded, appear to have been surrounded and compelled to surrender."

- .....
- Examine Map 12.2, and find the two rivers in question. Was the issue as clear as the president argued here?
  - Both Mexico and the United States claimed to have been invaded, yet even some Americans doubted this to be true. Whig Congressman Abraham Lincoln demanded that Polk bring a map to Congress to show the precise "spot" of American land where blood was shed. To what extent might the border dispute in southern Texas have masked Polk's larger objectives regarding the purchase of California?

---

Excerpted from President James Polk's War Message to Congress, 1846.



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

### MAP I2.2 The Southwest and the Mexican War

When the United States acquired Texas, it inherited the Texans' boundary disputes with Mexico. This map shows the outcome: war with Mexico in 1846 and the acquisition of the disputed territories in Texas as well as most of Arizona, New Mexico, and California through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.



House reconsidered the war appropriations bill, but Van Buren Democrats defied Polk by attaching the amendment again, and the House approved it once more. Again the Senate rejected the amended bill. The House finally decided in April to appropriate money for the war without stipulating whether or not slavery would be permitted.

While all this political infighting was going on in Washington, D.C., a real war was going on in the Southwest. In California, American settlers rallied in open rebellion in the Sacramento Valley. Crafting a flag that depicted a grizzly bear, they announced the birth of the independent Bear Flag Republic. Frémont's force joined the Bear Flag rebels, and when the little army arrived in Monterey on July 19, they found that the Pacific fleet had already acted on Polk's orders and seized the city. The Mexican forces were in full flight southward. In Texas, Taylor marched across the Rio Grande and headed for the Mexican city of Monterrey, which he attacked in September 1846. From Monterrey, Taylor planned to turn southward toward Mexico City and lead the main attack against the Mexican capital, but politics intervened.

After Taylor's successful siege at Monterrey, Polk began to perceive the popular general as a political threat. In an attempt to undermine Taylor's political appeal, Polk turned the war effort over to Winfield Scott, ordering Scott to gather an army at the port of Tampico, on the Gulf of Mexico. Drawing men from Taylor's and other forces, Scott was then to sail down to Veracruz, from which the army was to move inland to take Mexico City (see Map 12.2). While Taylor stalled a Mexican force under Santa Anna at the



An American private, Samuel E. Chamberlain, made this drawing of the Battle of Buena Vista. Present at the battle, Chamberlain watched as Mexican forces overran an artillery emplacement. The Americans eventually turned the tide, and the battle came out a draw. Even so, troops under Santa Anna were forced to retreat into the Mexican interior, spoiling the general's hope for a quick and easy victory against the invading Americans. "Battle of Buena Vista" by Samuel Chamberlain, 1847. San Jacinto Museum of History Association.

Battle of Buena Vista, Scott's forces captured Veracruz on March 9. Marching relentlessly toward Mexico City, Scott and his force routed the Mexican defenders and captured the city on September 13, 1847.

Scott's enormous success immediately became a liability to a formal truce: Santa Anna's government collapsed, leaving no one to negotiate with American peace commissioner Nicholas Trist. The Mexican government finally elected a new president and on November 11 informed Trist that it was ready to begin negotiations. Finally, on February 2, 1848, Trist and the Mexican delegation signed the **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**, granting the United States all the territory between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande and between there and the Pacific. In exchange, Trist agreed that the United States would pay Mexico \$15 million, and he committed the United States to honoring all claims made by Texans for damages resulting from the war. Although President Polk had begun to consider annexing all of Mexico, many antislavery voices loudly protested bringing so much land south of the Missouri Compromise line into the Union. Others opposed the annexation of Mexico because they feared that the largely Roman Catholic population might be a threat to Protestant institutions in the United States. Still others, many of whom had opposed the war to begin with, had moral objections to taking any territory by force. Perhaps more convincing than any of these arguments, however, was the fact that the war had cost a lot of money, and congressmen were unwilling to allocate more if peace was within reach. Polk submitted the treaty Trist had negotiated, and the Senate approved it by a vote of thirty-eight to fourteen.

**Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** Treaty (1848) in which Mexico gave up Texas above the Rio Grande and ceded New Mexico and California to the United States in return for \$15 million.

# Summary

The acquisition of Texas and the Southwest, even at the cost of war, marked the end of an era of dynamic growth and change. The United States extended from Atlantic to Pacific, and although vast areas in between remained unexplored and unsettled, the nation's manifest destiny to occupy every inch of North America seemed well on its way to completion.

Americans responded in many different ways to the unsettling changes that had been taking place as part of this Great Transformation. Different economic classes responded by creating their own cultures and by adopting specific strategies for dealing with anxiety. Some chose violent protest, some passive resistance. Some looked to heaven for solutions and others to earthly utopias. And out of this complex swirl, something entirely new and unexpected emerged: a new America, on its way to being socially, politically, intellectually, and culturally modern.

A new generation emerged that grasped greedily at the new opportunities offered by new economic and

cultural arrangements. Literacy grew as never before in the nation's history and with it a thirst for new knowledge. Book publishers, magazine editors, and charitable societies competed to meet this new demand for information and entertainment. As expanding media made more people more aware of issues taking place nationwide, they were drawn into politics as never before, resulting in a historic turnout in the presidential election of 1840.

In that election, William Henry Harrison, a man who had become a national figure by fighting against Indian sovereignty and for westward expansion, swept a new sentiment into national politics. Increasingly Americans came to believe that the West would provide the solutions to the problems ushered in during the Great Transformation. In the short term, this notion led Americans to embark on an exciting race toward the Pacific. But different visions about how the West would solve the nation's problems soon added to the ever-growing air of crisis.

## Key Terms

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <i>romanticism</i> , p. 271            | <i>Dorothea Dix</i> , p. 279                  | <i>Specie Circular</i> , p. 286             |
| <i>Ralph Waldo Emerson</i> , p. 272    | <i>temperance</i> , p. 279                    | <i>John Tyler</i> , p. 287                  |
| <i>transcendentalism</i> , p. 273      | <i>Horace Mann</i> , p. 279                   | <i>Oregon Question</i> , p. 288             |
| <i>transcendent</i> , p. 273           | <i>parochial schools</i> , p. 280             | <i>proviso</i> , p. 288                     |
| <i>nonconformity</i> , p. 273          | <i>American Colonization Society</i> , p. 280 | <i>probate court</i> , p. 288               |
| <i>Henry David Thoreau</i> , p. 273    | <i>William Lloyd Garrison</i> , p. 280        | <i>First Organic Laws</i> , p. 288          |
| <i>allegories</i> , p. 274             | <i>Mason-Dixon Line</i> , p. 280              | <i>Antonio López de Santa Anna</i> , p. 289 |
| <i>minstrel shows</i> , p. 274         | <i>abolitionists</i> , p. 281                 | <i>Texas Revolution</i> , p. 290            |
| <i>trickster tales</i> , p. 275        | <i>gag rule</i> , p. 281                      | <i>Alamo</i> , p. 290                       |
| <i>extended family</i> , p. 275        | <i>tabled</i> , p. 281                        | <i>Sam Houston</i> , p. 290                 |
| <i>spiritual</i> , p. 276              | <i>Lucretia Mott</i> , p. 281                 | <i>Treaty of Velasco</i> , p. 290           |
| <i>utopian</i> , p. 276                | <i>Elizabeth Cady Stanton</i> , p. 281        | <i>filibustered</i> , p. 290                |
| <i>New Harmony</i> , p. 276            | <i>trade unions</i> , p. 282                  | <i>Webster-Ashburton Treaty</i> , p. 290    |
| <i>Frances (Fanny) Wright</i> , p. 276 | <i>National Trades</i> , p. 282               | <i>James K. Polk</i> , p. 291               |
| <i>Brook Farm</i> , p. 276             | <i>passive resistance</i> , p. 283            | <i>joint resolution</i> , p. 291            |
| <i>socialistic</i> , p. 276            | <i>vigilance committees</i> , p. 284          | <i>Zachary Taylor</i> , p. 292              |
| <i>Fourierism</i> , p. 277             | <i>party platform</i> , p. 285                | <i>John C. Frémont</i> , p. 292             |
| <i>Oneida Community</i> , p. 277       | <i>spoils system</i> , p. 285                 | <i>oligarchy</i> , p. 292                   |
| <i>lay exhorters</i> , p. 277          | <i>Whig Party</i> , p. 285                    | <i>Wilmot Proviso</i> , p. 292              |
| <i>Second Great Awakening</i> , p. 278 | <i>favorite sons</i> , p. 286                 | <i>Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo</i> , p. 295 |
| <i>Christian benevolence</i> , p. 279  | <i>Panic of 1837</i> , p. 286                 |   |



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# Sectional Conflict and Shattered Union

## 1848–1860

# CHAPTER 13

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Frederick Douglass

In 1838, Frederick Douglass, a slave living in Baltimore, decided that he would try to escape. This was no sudden impulse; Douglass had been thinking about escape and freedom for most of his life. As a young boy he told his white friends, “You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!*” He had tried once before to make his way to freedom, but was captured and returned to his owner. Though his master threatened to sell him to a cotton plantation in Alabama, Douglass’s intelligence and skills were worth more in Baltimore: he was made an apprentice at the local shipyard, eventually becoming a master ship caulker. His productivity earned him a good deal of freedom: he made his own contracts, set his own work schedule, and collected his own earnings. But his desire for freedom never abated. “I have observed this in my experience of slavery,” Douglass commented, “that whenever my condition was improved, instead of its increasing my contentment, it only increased my desire to be free.”

Like most successful runaways, Douglass had the advantage of living in a border region, near free territory, and had an unusual degree of personal freedom and economic independence. Using a wide network of personal connections, he raised money and secured forged documents that entitled him to pass unmolested through slave territory. On September 3, Douglass disguised himself as a merchant sailor and boarded a train heading north out of Baltimore. Switching from train to ferry boat, ferry boat to steamship, steamship back to train, and finally train back to ferry boat, Douglass made his way northward, arriving in New York City early on the morning of September 4. Although he had a couple of close calls, Douglass’s escape had succeeded.

Douglass now was free, but the promised land of the non-slave North proved disappointing. Moving to the town of New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he hoped to earn a living in the boatyards, Douglass found that “such was the strength of



#### FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Seeking economic self-sufficiency and personal freedom, Douglass chose to escape from slavery in 1838 to seek employment as a free man in Massachusetts. Facing severe racial discrimination, Douglass had difficulty making a living until abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison heard him speak at an antislavery rally. Garrison promoted Douglass as a lecturer and he soon became recognized as one of the most effective abolitionist activists in the country.

*Samuel J. Miller, American, 1822–1888, Frederick Douglass, 1847–52, Cased half-plate daguerreotype, Major Acquisitions Centennial Endowment, 1996.433, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago.*

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### New Political Options

Politicizing Slavery: The Election of 1848

Disaffected Voices and Political Dissent

#### INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Frederick Douglass’s Fourth of July Oration

The Politics of Compromise

A Changing Political Economy

Political Instability and the Election of 1852

Increasing Tension Under Pierce

#### Toward a House Divided

Bleeding Kansas

Bringing Slavery Home to the North

#### IT MATTERS TODAY: The Dred Scott Case

The Dominance of Sectionalism

#### The Divided Nation

The Election of 1860

The First Wave of Secession

Responses to Disunion

#### INVESTIGATING AMERICA:

Alexander Stephens’s Cornerstone Speech, 1861

#### The Nation Dissolved

Lincoln, Sumter, and War

Choosing Sides in Virginia

Trouble Along the Border

#### Summary

**A**lthough Frederick Douglass was not a politician, he was hardly immune to the political wrangling going on around him. Like many Americans, Douglass's life was in a state of constant upheaval as politicians engaged in abstract power games that had all-too-real consequences.

Struggles over tariffs, coinage, internal improvements, public land policy, and dozens of other practical issues intersected in complicated ways with the over-inflated egos of power-hungry politicians to create an air of political contention and national crisis. The discovery of gold in California followed by a massive rush of Americans into the new territory added greed to the equation. Then strong-willed men such as Jefferson Davis and Stephen A. Douglas threw more fuel on the fire as they fought over the best—that is, most profitable and politically advantageous—route for a transcontinental railroad that would tie California's wealth to the rest of the nation. The halls of Congress rang with debate, denunciation, and even physical violence.

Beneath it all lurked an institution that Frederick Douglass knew all too well: slavery. In a changing society rife with the problems of expansion, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization, political leaders tried either to seek compromise or to ignore the slavery question altogether. In reality, they could do neither. As the nation's leaders wrestled with a host of new issues, the confrontation between northern and southern societies peaked. Although many people wanted peace and favored reconciliation, ultimately both sides rejected compromise, leading to the end of the Union and the beginning of America's most destructive and deadly war.

## New Political Options

- ★ *How did the presidential election in 1848 help to foster political dissent?*
- ★ *How did events in Europe help to push the American economy forward during the 1850s? In what ways did this contribute to growing political tensions?*

The 1848 presidential election celebrated American expansion and nationalism, but at the same time it revealed a strong undercurrent of dissent. The political system held together during the election, and the existing parties managed to maintain the politics of avoidance, but the successes enjoyed by Free Soil challengers were evidence that significant problems churned under the surface. It was clear to many that the nation's

# Chronology

<b>1848</b>	Zachary Taylor elected president Immigration to United States exceeds 100,000 Revolutions in France, Germany, and Hungary	<b>1856</b>	James Buchanan elected president Demise of Know-Nothing Party <i>Dred Scott</i> decision
<b>1850</b>	Compromise of 1850	<b>1857</b>	Proslavery Lecompton constitution adopted in Kansas
<b>1852</b>	First railroad line completed to Chicago Harriet Beecher Stowe's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> Franklin Pierce elected president Whig Party collapses Know-Nothing Party emerges	<b>1858</b>	Lincoln-Douglas debates Minnesota admitted to Union
<b>1853</b>	Gadsden Purchase	<b>1859</b>	Oregon admitted to Union John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry Darwin's <i>Origin of Species</i> published
<b>1854</b>	Republican Party formed Kansas-Nebraska Act Ostend Manifesto	<b>1860</b>	Abraham Lincoln elected president Crittenden compromise fails
<b>1855</b>	Proslavery posse sacks Lawrence, Kansas Pottawatomie Massacre	<b>1861</b>	Confederate States of America formed Fort Sumter shelled Federal troops occupy Maryland and Missouri Confederate troops occupy east Tennessee

political system was not meeting their economic and ideological needs, and they began looking for new options. Efforts at compromise might save the nation from the immediate consequences of growth, modernization, and sectional tension, but crisis clearly was in the air.

### Politicizing Slavery: The Election of 1848

The American victory in the War with Mexico was an enormous shot in the arm for American nationalism and manifest destiny, but it also brought the divisive issue of slavery back into mainstream politics to a degree unknown since the Missouri Compromise. Opposed to slavery expansion for both political and ethical reasons, Congressman David Wilmot had broken a gentlemen's agreement among congressmen to skirt around slavery issues, firmly wedging American expansion and slavery in the minds of many. Even a largely apolitical nonconformist like Henry David Thoreau found the connection obvious, and protested the war for that reason.

Of course, being opposed to the expansion of slavery was not the same thing as opposing the institution of slavery itself, and antislavery sentiments were still not widespread among the American people during the 1840s. However, as the debates over the Mexican War indicate, abolitionist voices were getting louder and more politically insistent. Despite strong and sometimes violent opposition, the abolition movement had continued to grow, especially among the privileged and educated classes in the Northeast. Throughout the 1830s, evangelicals increasingly stressed the sinful nature of slavery, urging the immediate, uncompensated liberation of slaves.

Sojourner Truth was a remarkable woman for her time, or for any time. One anecdote claims that a white policeman in New York state demanded that she identify herself. Using her cane to thrust herself upright to her full six feet of height, she boomed out the same words that God used to identify himself to Moses: "I am that I am." The policeman was unnerved and scurried away. Showing such bravery and pride in both her race and sex, it is little wonder that she commanded great respect in both antislavery and women's rights circles throughout her lifetime.

— Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.



William Lloyd Garrison, however, consistently alienated his followers. Calling the Constitution "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell," Garrison burned a copy of it, telling his followers, "so perish all compromises with tyranny," and he urged them to have no dealings with a government that permitted so great an evil as slavery. Citing the reluctance of most organized churches to condemn slavery outright, Garrison urged his followers to break with them as well. He also offended many of his white evangelical supporters by associating with and supporting free black advocates of abolition.

During the 1830s, even moderates within the abolition movement had celebrated Frederick Douglass, **Sojourner Truth**, and other African American abolitionists, welcoming them as members of the American Anti-Slavery Society. But more insistent black voices frightened white abolitionists. African American abolitionist David Walker cried, "The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us." Walker advocated that African Americans should "kill or be killed." Another black spokesman, Henry Highland Garnet, proclaimed, "Strike for your lives and liberties. Now is the day and hour. Let every slave in the land do this and the days of slavery are numbered. Rather die freemen than live to be slaves."

Garrison's sentiments mobilized some, but most of his followers were more conservative. Efforts by moderate antislavery supporters to bring limited abolitionism into the political mainstream meshed with the political aspirations of both those who opposed

**Sojourner Truth** Abolitionist and feminist who was freed from slavery in 1827 and became a leading preacher against slavery and for the rights of women.

slavery's expansion primarily for political and economic reasons and those who were motivated by purely ethical concerns. Hoping to cash in on the popular attention created by debates over slavery during the War with Mexico, moderates in 1840 challenged both Whig and Democrat ambivalence by forming a third political party: the **Liberty Party**.

Specifically disavowing Garrison's radical aims, Liberty Party leaders argued that slavery would eventually die on its own if it could be confined geographically. In addition, the Liberty Party called for the abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C., and in all the territories where it already existed. This moderate message, though certainly more popular than Garrison's radical appeals, drew little open political support: In 1840, Liberty Party presidential candidate James G. Birney had garnered only about seven thousand out of the nearly 2.5 million votes cast. But in 1844, when he again ran on the Liberty Party ticket, he won sixty-two thousand popular votes. Clearly a moderate antislavery position was becoming more acceptable.

Even in the face of such evidence, both major parties continued to practice the politics of avoidance. Suffering ill health, Polk chose not to run for a second term in 1848, leaving the Democrats scrambling for a candidate. They chose as their presidential candidate Lewis Cass of Michigan—a longtime moderate on slavery issues who advocated **popular sovereignty** for the new territories. The Whigs hoped to ride a wave of nationalism following the War with Mexico by running military hero Zachary Taylor, a Louisianan and a slaveholder, for president and moderate New Yorker Millard Fillmore for vice president.

As in 1840 and 1844, it took a third party to cut to the heart of the issues. Promoting the candidacy of antislavery advocate Martin Van Buren, the Free Soil Party emerged in 1848 announcing as its slogan "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men." It continued to advance the moderate antislavery position proposed by the now defunct Liberty Party. Though overshadowed by the two traditional parties, Van Buren's new coalition won nearly 300,000 votes. In the end, however, Taylor and the mainstream Whigs were able to claim the presidency.

### Disaffected Voices and Political Dissent

It did not take long after the election of 1848 for cracks in the system to become more prominent. In an effort to compete with Democrats in northeastern cities, the Whigs had tried to win Catholic and immigrant voters away from the rival party. The strategy backfired. Not only did the Whigs fail to attract large numbers of immigrants, but they alienated two core groups among their existing supporters. One such group was artisans, who saw immigrants as the main source of their economic and social woes. The other was Protestant evangelicals, to whom Roman Catholic Irish and German immigrants symbolized all that was wrong in the world and threatening to the American republic. Whig leaders could do little to address these voters' immediate concerns, and increasing numbers left the Whig Party to form state and local coalitions more in tune with their hopes and fears.

One of the most prominent of these locally oriented groups was the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant **Know-Nothings**. This loosely knit political organization traced its origins back to secret **nativist** societies that had come into existence during the ethnic tension and rioting in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York in the 1830s. These secret fraternal groups at first dabbled in politics by endorsing candidates who shared their **xenophobic** views. Remaining underground, they told their members to say "I know nothing" if they were questioned about the organization or its political intrigues, hence the name Know-Nothings.

**Liberty Party** The first antislavery political party; it was formed in Albany, New York, in 1840.

**popular sovereignty** Policy by which a territory's citizens would decide whether or not to legalize slavery at the time they applied for statehood.

**Know-Nothings** Members of anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant organizations who eventually formed themselves into a national political party.

**nativist** Favoring native-born inhabitants of a country over immigrants.

**xenophobic** Fearful of or hateful toward foreigners or those seen as being different.

# Investigating America

## Frederick Douglass's Fourth of July Oration, 1852

After escaping from slavery and then experiencing continuing denigration in the North, Frederick Douglass eventually became a very effective speaker for the abolition cause. Always very direct, Douglass often said things to white audiences that they *really* did not want to hear. In 1852 the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester invited Douglass to speak at its Fourth of July celebration. The audience was extremely shocked by what he said.

.....

Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring out humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us? . . .

But such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The

blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, *not* mine. . . .

Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world.

.....

- To whom is Douglass referring here? Whom did he consider his constituency to be?
- What is Douglass's point in denying connection to the holiday about which he had been invited to speak?



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

Increasingly after 1848, these secretive groups became more public and more vocal. To the artisans and others who formed the core of the Know-Nothing movement, the issues of slavery and sectionalism that seemed to dominate the national political debate were nothing but devices being used by political insiders and the established parties to divert ordinary Americans from real issues of concern. The Know-Nothings pointed instead at immigration, loss of job security, urban crowding and violence, and political corruption as the true threats to American liberties. They built a platform charging that immigrants were part of a Catholic plot to overthrow democracy in the United States. Seeking to counter this perceived threat, they contended that "Americans must rule America" and urged a twenty-one-year naturalization period, a ban against naturalized citizens holding public office, and the use of the Protestant Bible in public schools.

Many Know-Nothings had deep ties with the evangelical Protestant movement and indeed represented one dimension of Christian dissent, but not all Protestant dissenters shared their single-mindedness. Many evangelical reformers believed the nation was beset by a host of evils that imperiled its existence. Progress without Christian principles and individual morality, they thought, posed a great danger for the United States, and they viewed slavery, alcohol, Catholicism, religious heresy, and corrupt government as

threats to the nation's moral fiber. In their efforts to create moral government and to direct national destiny, these reformers advocated social reform through both religious and political action. Temperance was one of the more prominent topics of their political concern. The war on alcohol had made great gains since the 1830s: thirteen states had enacted laws prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor. Overall, however, progress seemed slow, and like Know-Nothings and others, temperance advocates became increasingly impatient with the traditional political parties.

Although none of these movements alone was capable of overturning the ruling political order, they were all symptomatic of serious problems perceived by growing numbers of citizens. Although there were serious differences in the problems that each of these groups emphasized, they shared a number of perceptions in common. All that was missing was a catalyst that could bind them together into a unified dissenting force.

### The Politics of Compromise

While dissidents of various types attacked the political parties from outside, problems raised by national expansion were continuing to erode party unity from within. Immediately after Zachary Taylor's election in 1848, California's future became a new divisive issue.

California presented a peculiar political problem. Once word reached the rest of the nation that California was rich with gold, politicians immediately began grasping for control over the newly acquired territory. Although large parts of the area lay below the 36°30' line set for slavery expansion by the Missouri Compromise, that legislation applied only to territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. In addition, the failure of Congress to pass Wilmot's Proviso left the question of slavery in the new territories wide open.

Having been primarily responsible for crafting the earlier compromise, Henry Clay took it upon himself to find a solution to the new situation. Clay was convinced that any successful agreement would have to address all sides of the issue. He thus proposed a complex **omnibus** bill to the Senate on January 20, 1850. California would enter the Union as a free state, but the slavery question would be left to popular sovereignty in all other territories acquired through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The bill also directed Texas to drop a continuing border dispute with New Mexico in exchange for federal assumption of Texas's public debt. Then, to appease abolitionists, Clay called for an end to the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and balanced that with a clause popular with southerners: a new, more effective **fugitive slave law**.

Although Clay was trying to please all sectional interests, the omnibus bill satisfied no one; Congress debated it without resolution for seven months. Despite appeals to reason by Clay and Daniel Webster, Congress remained hopelessly deadlocked. Finally, in July 1850, Clay's proposals were defeated. The 73-year-old political veteran left the capital tired and dispirited, but **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois set himself to the task of reviving the compromise. Using practical economic arguments and backroom political arm twisting, Douglas proposed each component of Clay's omnibus package as a separate bill, steering each forward toward a comprehensive compromise. Finally, in September, Congress passed the **Compromise of 1850** (see Map 13.1).

The Compromise of 1850 did little to relieve underlying regional differences and only aggravated political dissent. That slaveowners could pursue runaway slaves into northern states and return them into bondage brought slavery too close to home for many northerners. Among both white and African American antislavery activists during the 1850s, the fugitive slave law fueled support for the **Underground Railroad**. This

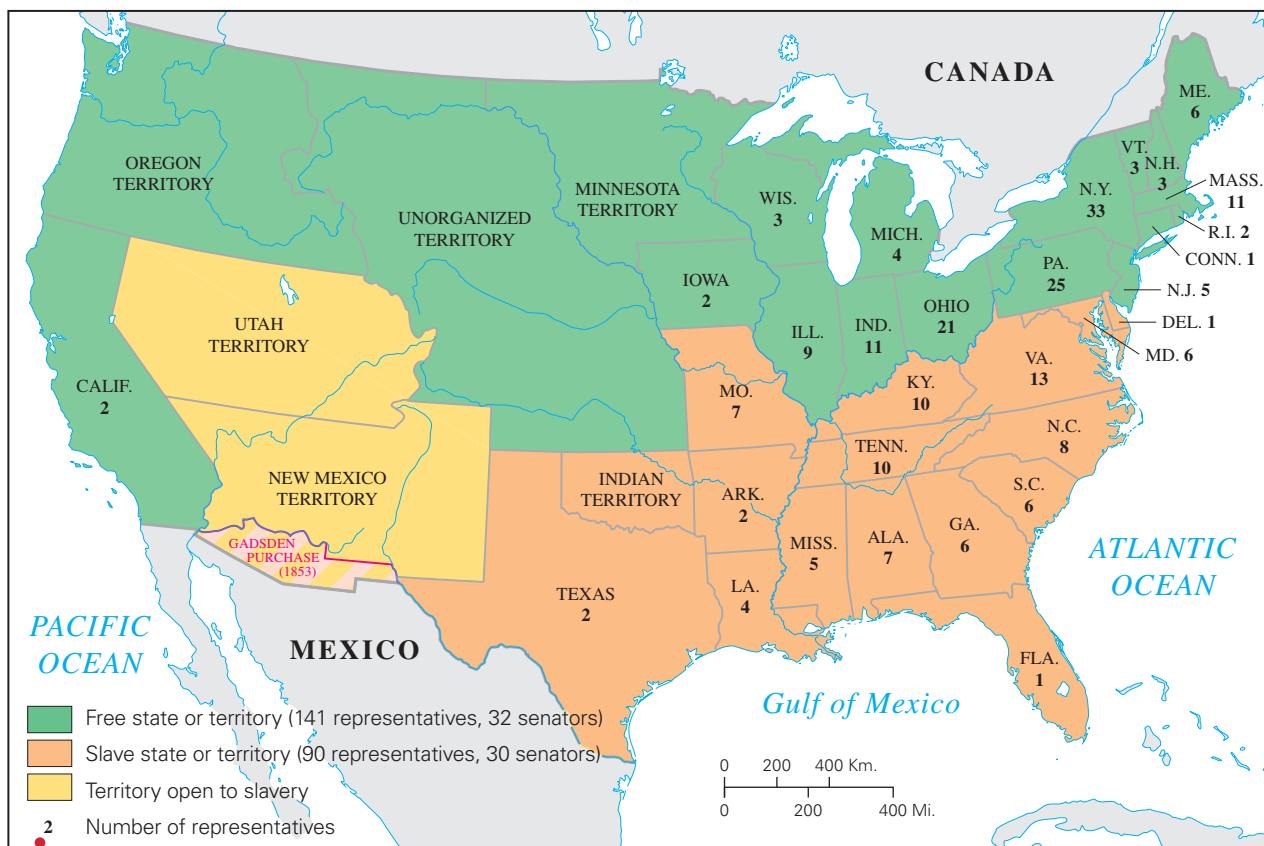
**omnibus** Including or covering many matters; an omnibus bill is a piece of legislation with many parts.

**fugitive slave law** Law providing for the return of escaped slaves to their owners.

**Stephen A. Douglas** Illinois senator who tried to reconcile northern and southern differences over slavery through the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

**Compromise of 1850** Plan intended to reconcile the North and the South on the issue of slavery; it recognized the principle of popular sovereignty and included a strong fugitive slave law.

**Underground Railroad** The loose network of northerners who helped fugitive slaves escape to Canada or to safe areas in free states.



The acquisition of Texas and California brought a showdown between the North and the South over representation in the national government. As this map shows, the Compromise of 1850 permitted Texas and California to be admitted to the Union without seriously undermining the balance of power in the Senate. In the House of Representatives, however, the balance favored the North.

loose network provided accommodations and aid for runaway slaves bound for safety in Canada along escape routes through northern territory hostile to the fugitive slave law.

Nor did southerners find any reason to celebrate the compromise: Admission of another nonslave state further drained their power in Congress and slavery had gained no positive protection, either in the territories or at home. Still, the compromise created a brief respite from the slavery-extension question at a time when the nation's attention increasingly needed to focus on other major changes in national life.

### A Changing Political Economy

In the years following the Compromise of 1850, American economic and territorial growth continued to play a destabilizing role in both national and regional development. Most notably, during the 1850s industrial growth accelerated, further altering the nation's economic structure. By 1860 less than half of all northern workers made a living from agriculture as northern industry became more concentrated. Steam began to replace water as the primary power source, and factories were no longer limited to locations along rivers and streams. The use of interchangeable parts became more sophisticated and intricate. In 1851, for example, Isaac Singer devised an assembly

line using this technology and began mass-producing sewing machines, fostering a boom in ready-made clothing. As industry expanded, the North became more reliant on the West and South for raw materials and for the food consumed by those working in northeastern factories.

Railroad development stimulated economic and industrial growth. Between 1850 and 1860, the miles of railroad track in the United States increased from 9,000 to more than 30,000. The vast majority of these lines linked the Northeast with the Midwest, carrying produce to eastern markets and eastern manufactures to western consumers. In 1852 the Michigan Southern Railroad completed the first line into Chicago from the East, and by 1855 that city had become a key transportation hub linking regions farther west with the eastern seaboard.

Building a railroad required huge sums of money. In populous areas, where passenger and freight traffic was heavy, the promise of a quick and profitable return on investment allowed railroads to raise sufficient capital by selling company stock. In sparsely settled regions, however, where investment returns were much slower, state and local governments loaned money directly to rail companies, financed them indirectly by purchasing stock, or extended state tax exemptions. The most crucial aid to railroads, however, was federal land grants.

The federal government, which owned vast amounts of unsettled territory, gave land to developers who then leased or sold plots of ground along the proposed route to finance railroad construction. In 1850 Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas engineered a 2.6-million-acre land grant to Illinois, Mississippi, and Alabama for a railroad between Chicago and Mobile. Congress also invested heavily in plans for a transcontinental railroad and on March 4, 1853, appropriated \$150,000 to survey potential routes across the continent.

Feeding the demand for improved transportation was a rise in global grain prices during the 1850s. Several years of bad weather spurred crop failures throughout Europe, and beginning in 1848, revolutions and wars across much of the continent disrupted farm productivity. The combination of rail transport and technological advances in farming equipment enabled American farmers to cash in on the growing demand. Using the steel plow devised in 1837 by **John Deere**, farmers could cultivate more acres with greater ease. The mechanical reaper invented in 1831 by **Cyrus McCormick** allowed a single operator to harvest as much as fourteen field hands could by hand. Railroads distributed these new pieces of heavy equipment at a reasonable cost. The combination of greater production potential and speedy transportation prompted westerners to increase farm size and concentrate on cash crops. The outcome of these developments was a vast increase in the economic and political power of the West.

Western grain markets provided the foodstuffs for American industrialization, and Europe provided much of the labor. Factories employed unskilled workers for the most part, and immigrants made up the majority of that labor pool as food shortages, poverty, and political upheaval drove millions from Europe, especially from Ireland and Germany. Total immigration to the United States exceeded 100,000 for the first time in 1848, and in 1851, 221,000 people migrated to the United States from Ireland alone. In 1852 the number of German immigrants reached 145,000. Many of these newcomers, particularly the Irish, were not trained in skilled crafts and wound up settling in the industrial urban centers of the Northeast, where they could find work in the factories.

This combination of changes set the stage for political crisis. Liberalized suffrage rules transformed naturalized immigrants into voters, and both parties courted them, adding their interests to the political pot. Meanwhile, a mechanized textile industry,

**John Deere** American industrialist who pioneered the manufacture of steel plows especially suited for working hard-packed prairie soil.

**Cyrus McCormick** Virginia inventor and manufacturer who developed and mass-produced the McCormick reaper, a machine that harvested grain.

**agrarian capitalism** A system of agriculture based on the efficient, specialized production of crops intended to generate profits rather than subsistence.

hungry for southern fiber, lent vitality to the continued growth of the cotton kingdom and the slave labor system that gave it life. Northern political leaders visualized an industrial nation based on free labor, but that view ran counter to the southern elites' ideals of **agrarian capitalism** based on slavery. In the West, most continued to believe in the Jeffersonian ideal of an agricultural nation of small and medium-size farms and could not accept either industrial or cotton capitalism as positive developments.

### Political Instability and the Election of 1852

Dynamic economic progress improved material life throughout the nation, but it also raised serious questions about what course progress should take. As one clear-sighted northern minister pointed out in 1852, the debate was not about whether America should pursue progress but about "different kinds and methods of progress." Contradictory visions of national destiny were about to cause the breakdown of the existing party system.

Slavery seemed to loom behind every debate, as the question challenged notions of autonomy in both the North and the South. In their widely disseminated rhetoric, abolitionists expanded the specter of the Slave Power conspiracy, especially in the aftermath of the Compromise of 1850. Whether they were farmers in western states like Illinois or artisans in Pennsylvania, common people were jealous of their own local institutions and would resist a southern takeover. Similarly, common people in the South would not accept interference from outsiders, and the ever-more vigorous anti-southern crusade by northern radicals alarmed them as well.

The Compromise of 1850 momentarily eased regional fears, but sectional tensions still smoldered beneath the surface. These embers flamed anew in 1852 with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by **Harriet Beecher Stowe**. Stowe portrayed the darkest inhumanities of southern slavery in the first American novel to include African Americans as central characters. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold three hundred thousand copies in its first year. Adapted for the stage, it became one of the most popular plays of the period. The book stirred public opinion and breathed new life into antislavery sentiments, leading Free-Soilers and so-called **conscience Whigs** to renew their efforts to limit or end slavery. When these activists saw that the Whig Party was incapable of addressing the slavery question in any effective way, they began to look for other political options.

Superficially, the Whigs seemed well organized and surprisingly unified as a new presidential election approached. They passed over Millard Fillmore, who had advanced into the presidency when Zachary Taylor died in office in July 1850, in favor of General Winfield Scott, Taylor's military rival in the War with Mexico. The Democrats remained divided through forty-nine ballots, unable to decide between Lewis Cass of Michigan, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, and **James Buchanan** of Pennsylvania. They finally settled on the virtually unknown **Franklin Pierce** of New Hampshire, who pledged to live by and uphold the Compromise of 1850 and keep slavery out of politics. This promise was enough to bring Martin Van Buren back to the Democrats, and he brought many Free-Soilers back with him. Many others, though, abandoned Van Buren and joined forces with conscience Whigs.

Scott was a national figure and a distinguished military hero, but Pierce gathered 254 electoral votes to Scott's 42. This one-sided victory, however, revealed more about the disarray in the Whig Party than it did about Pierce's popularity or Democratic Party strength. Splits between "cotton" and "conscience" groups splintered Whig unity. Regional tension escalated as Free-Soil rhetoric clashed with calls for extending slavery. Confrontations between Catholics and Protestants and between native-born and

**Harriet Beecher Stowe** American novelist and abolitionist whose novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fanned antislavery sentiment in the North.

**conscience Whigs** Members of the Whig Party who supported moderate abolitionism, as opposed to cotton Whigs, who opposed abolitionism.

**James Buchanan** Pennsylvania senator who was elected president in 1856 after gaining the Democratic nomination as a compromise candidate.

**Franklin Pierce** New Hampshire lawyer and Democratic politician nominated as a compromise candidate and elected president in 1852.

immigrant laborers caused bitter animosity. In the North, where immigration, industrialization, and antislavery sentiment were most prevalent and economic friction was most pronounced, massive numbers of voters, believing the Whigs incapable of addressing current problems, deserted the party.

### Increasing Tension Under Pierce

Southerners knew that a railroad based in the South would channel the flow of gold from California through their region. It would also open new areas for settlement and allow cotton agriculture to spread beyond the waterways that had proved so necessary to its expansion so far. Eventually the new territories would become states, increasing the South's national political power.

That model of development was totally unacceptable to several groups: to northern evangelicals, who viewed slavery as a moral blight on the nation; to Free-Soil advocates, who believed the spread of slavery would degrade white workers; and to northern manufacturers, who wanted to maintain dominance in Congress to ensure continued economic protection. In May 1853, only two months after assuming office, Pierce inflamed all of these groups by sending James Gadsden, a southern railroad developer, to Mexico to purchase a strip of land lying below the southern border of the New Mexico Territory. Any rail line built westward from a southern city would have to cross that land as it proceeded from Texas to California, and Pierce and his southern supporters wanted to make sure that it was part of the United States. The **Gadsden Purchase**, signed on December 30, 1853, added 29,640 square miles of land to the United States for a cost of \$10 million. It also finalized the southwestern border of the United States.

Rather than enhancing Pierce's reputation as a nationalist, the Gadsden Purchase fed the perception that he was a southern sympathizer promoting the extension of slavery. It also led to a more serious sectional crisis. The Gadsden Purchase prompted proponents of a southern route for the transcontinental railroad, led by Secretary of War **Jefferson Davis**, to push for government sponsorship of the project. Rooted politically in Chicago and having invested his own money in rail development, Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas rose to the challenge. He used his position as chairman of the Senate's Committee on Territories to block Davis's effort to build a transcontinental railroad through the South and pushed for a route westward from Chicago. This route passed through territory that had been set aside for a permanent Native American homeland and thus had not been organized into a federal territory. To rectify this problem, Douglas introduced a bill on January 4, 1854, incorporating the entire northern half of Indian Territory into a new federal entity called Nebraska.

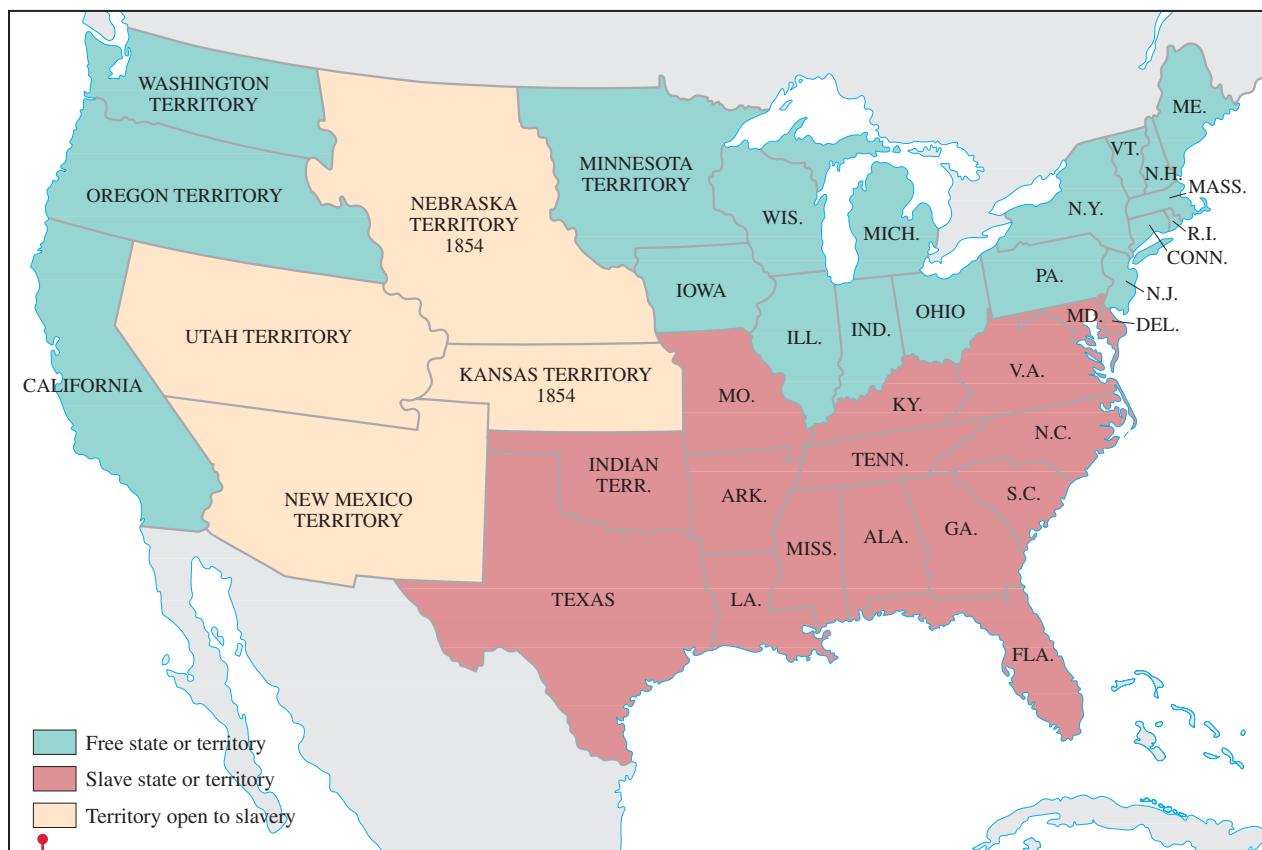
Douglas knew that he would need both northern and southern support to get his bill through Congress, so he tried to structure the legislation so as to alienate neither section. Fearful that the bill would spark yet another debate over slavery, Douglas sought to silence possible opposition by proposing that the matter be left to popular sovereignty within the territory itself—let the voters of Nebraska decide. Noting that the proposed territory was above the Missouri Compromise line, southerners pointed out that

The Democratic Party and Franklin Pierce, its representative in the White House, were also not immune to the pressures of a changing electorate. Pierce was part of the **Young America Movement**, which, as a whole, tried to ignore the slavery issue, advocating romantic and aggressive nationalism, manifest destiny, and republican revolutions throughout the Americas. In line with the Young America agenda, Pierce emphasized expansion; choosing a route for a transcontinental railroad became the key-stone in his agenda for the nation.

**Young America Movement** A political movement popular among young voters during the 1840s and early 1850s that advocated free-market capitalism, national expansionism, and American patriotism.

**Gadsden Purchase** A strip of land in present-day Arizona and New Mexico that the United States bought from Mexico in 1853 to secure a southern route for a transcontinental railroad.

**Jefferson Davis** Secretary of war under Franklin Pierce; he later became president of the Confederacy.



**MAP 13.2 The Kansas-Nebraska Act**

This map shows Douglas's proposed compromise to resolve the dilemma of organizing the vast territory separating the settled part of the United States from California and Oregon. His solution, designed to win profitable rail connections for his home district in Illinois, stirred a political crisis by repealing the Missouri Compromise and replacing it with popular sovereignty.

Congress might prohibit popular sovereignty from functioning. Douglas responded that the Compromise of 1850 "superseded" the 1820 Missouri Compromise, but he finally supported an amendment to his original bill dividing the territory in half—Nebraska in the north and Kansas in the south (see Map 13.2). The amended legislation—now called the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**—was based on the assumption that popular sovereignty would lead to slavery in Kansas and a system of free labor in Nebraska; Douglas calculated that both northerners and southerners would be satisfied and would support the bill.

**Kansas-Nebraska Act** Law passed by Congress in 1854 that allowed residents of Kansas and Nebraska territories to decide whether to allow slavery within their borders.

## Toward a House Divided

- ★ **How did various political coalitions react to the Kansas-Nebraska Act?**
- ★ **What was the effect of these various reactions on the national political climate?**

**Charles Sumner** Massachusetts senator who was brutally beaten by a southern congressman in 1856 after delivering a speech attacking the South.

Once again slavery threatened national political stability. In the North, opponents of the bill formed local coalitions to defeat it. On January 24, 1854, a group of Democrats including Salmon P. Chase, Gerrit Smith, Joshua Giddings, and **Charles Sumner**

published “The Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress.” They denounced the bill as an “atrocious plot” to make Nebraska a “dreary region of despotism, inhabited by masters and slaves.” On February 28, opponents of the Kansas-Nebraska bill met in Ripon, Wisconsin, and recommended the formation of a new political party. Similar meetings took place in several northern states as opposition to the bill grew. In the wake of these meetings, the existing party system would collapse and a new one would arise to replace it.

### Bleeding Kansas

Despite strong opposition, Douglas and Pierce rallied support for the Kansas-Nebraska Act in Congress. On May 26, 1854, after gaining approval in the House of Representatives, the bill passed the Senate, and Pierce signed it into law. Passage of the act crystallized northern antislavery sentiment. To protest, many northerners threatened **noncompliance** with the fugitive slave law of 1850. As Senator William Seward of New York vowed, “We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas, and God give the victory to the side which is stronger in numbers as it is in right.”

Such sentiments were about to ignite Kansas. In April 1854, abolitionist Eli Thayer of Worcester, Massachusetts, organized the New England Emigrant Aid Society to encourage antislavery supporters to move to Kansas. They reasoned that flooding a region subject to popular sovereignty with right-minded residents could effectively “save” it from slavery. This group eventually sent two thousand armed settlers to Kansas, founding Lawrence and other communities. With similar designs, proslavery southerners, particularly those in Missouri, also encouraged settlement in the territory. Like their northern counterparts, these southerners came armed and ready to fight for their cause.

President Pierce appointed governors in both Kansas and Nebraska and instructed them to organize elections for territorial legislatures. As proslavery and antislavery settlers vied for control of Kansas, the region became a testing ground for popular sovereignty. When the vote came on March 30, 1855, a large contingent of armed slavery supporters from Missouri—so-called border ruffians—crossed into Kansas and cast ballots for proslavery candidates. According to later Senate investigations, 60 percent of the votes cast were illegal. These unlawful ballots gave proslavery supporters a large majority in the Kansas legislature. They promptly expelled all abolitionist legislators and enacted the Kansas Code—a group of laws meant to drive all antislavery forces out of the territory. Antislavery advocates refused to acknowledge the validity of the election or the laws. They organized their own free-state government and drew up an alternative constitution, which they submitted to the voters.

Bloodshed soon followed. Attempting to bring the conflict to conclusion, proslavery territorial judge Samuel LeCompte called a grand jury of slavery supporters that indicted members of the free-state government for treason and sent a **posse** of about eight hundred men armed with rifles and five cannons to Lawrence. There they “arrested” the antislavery forces and sacked the town, burning buildings and plundering shops and homes. But the violence did not end there. Hearing news of the “Sack of Lawrence,” **John Brown**, an antislavery zealot, vowed to “fight fire with fire.” Reasoning that at least five antislavery supporters had been killed since the conflict erupted, he and seven others abducted five proslavery men living along the Pottawatomie River south of Lawrence and murdered them. The “Pottawatomie Massacre” triggered a series of episodes in which more than two hundred men were killed. Much of the violence was the work of border ruffians and zealots like Brown, but to many people in both the North and the South, the events symbolized the “righteousness” of their cause.

**noncompliance** Failure or refusal to obey a law or request.

**posse** A group of citizens deputized by a court or peace officer to assist in law enforcement.

**John Brown** Abolitionist who fought proslavery settlers in Kansas in 1855; he was hanged for treason after seizing the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry in 1859 as part of an effort to liberate southern slaves.

The Kansas issue also led to violence in Congress. During the debates over the admission of the territory, Charles Sumner, a senator from Massachusetts, delivered an abusive and threatening speech against proslavery advocates. In particular, he made insulting remarks about South Carolina and its aged senator Andrew Butler. Butler was out of town, but Butler's nephew, Representative Preston Brooks, accosted Sumner and nearly beat him to death with a cane. Though **censured** by the House of Representatives, Brooks was overwhelmingly reelected by his home district and openly praised for his actions—he received canes as gifts from admirers all over the South.

**censure** To issue an official rebuke, as by a legislature to one of its members.

**Republican Party** Political party formed in 1854 that opposed the extension of slavery into the western territories.

**plank** One of the articles of a political platform.

Meanwhile the presidential election of 1856 was approaching. The Pierce administration's actions, southern expansionism, and the Kansas-Nebraska controversy swelled the ranks of dissenters like those who had convened in Ripon. Now formally calling themselves the **Republican Party**, these northern and western groups began actively seeking support. Immigration also remained a major issue, but the Know-Nothings, despite their success at the local and state levels, split over slavery at their initial national convention in 1855. Disagreement over a **plank** dealing with the Kansas-Nebraska Act caused most northerners to bolt from the convention. Some formed an antislavery group called the Know-Somethings, but many joined Republican coalitions. In 1856 the remaining Know-Nothings reconvened and nominated former president Millard Fillmore as the party's standard-bearer. John C. Frémont, a moderate abolitionist who had achieved fame as the liberator of California, got the Republican nomination. The few remaining Whigs endorsed Fillmore at their convention, while some former Know-Nothings met separately and endorsed Frémont. The Democrats rejected both Pierce and Douglas and nominated James Buchanan from Pennsylvania, selecting John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky as Buchanan's running mate to balance the ticket between the North and the South.

The election became a contest for party survival rather than a national referendum on slavery. Buchanan received 45 percent of the popular vote and 163 electoral votes. Frémont finished second with 33 percent of the popular vote and 114 electoral votes. Fillmore received 21 percent of the popular vote but only 8 electoral votes. Frémont's surprisingly narrow margin of defeat demonstrated the appeal of the newly formed Republican coalition to northern voters. The Know-Nothings, fragmented over slavery, disappeared and never again attempted a national organization.

### Bringing Slavery Home to the North

On March 4, 1857, James Buchanan became president of the United States. The 65-year-old Pennsylvanian had begun his political career in Congress in 1821 and owed much of his success to southern support. His election came at a time when the nation needed strong leadership, but Buchanan seemed unable to provide it. During the campaign, he had emphasized national unity, but he proved incapable of achieving a unifying compromise. His attempt to preserve the politics of avoidance only strengthened radicalism in both the North and the South. Regional tensions colored all political issues, and every debate became a contest among competing social, political, and economic ideologies.

**Dred Scott** Slave who sued for his liberty in the Missouri courts, arguing that four years on free soil had made him free; the Supreme Court's 1857 ruling against him negated the Missouri Compromise.

Although Buchanan's shortcomings contributed to the rising crisis, an event occurred within days of his inauguration that sent shock waves through the already troubled nation. **Dred Scott**, a slave once owned by John Emerson, resided in Missouri, a slave state. But between 1831 and 1833, Emerson, an army surgeon, had taken Scott with him during various postings, including stints in Illinois and Wisconsin, where the Missouri Compromise banned slavery. Scott's attorney argued that living in Illinois and Wisconsin had made Scott a free man. When, after nearly six years in the Missouri courts, the



# It Matters Today

## THE DRED SCOTT CASE

Frederick Douglass was disappointed to discover that freedom for African Americans did not also mean equality. This personal revelation was soon reinforced by one of the most important cases ever to reach the Supreme Court. Denying once and for all that freedom and equality for people of African heritage were identical, the Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* declared that because no state at the time the Constitution was ratified had included African Americans as citizens, then no one of African descent could become a citizen of the United States. Ever! It would take the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution to remove the legal justification behind the Court's opinion, but even these did not reverse the racism underlying the decision. The *Dred Scott* case and the amendments designed to correct

the constitutional defects that led to it still play a key role in dozens of cases in the nation's courts each year. Men and women of many backgrounds continue to seek to make real the tie between freedom and equality that Dred Scott and Frederick Douglass only dreamed of.

- To what extent do you think that the *Dred Scott* case made Civil War in the United States inevitable? Explain.
- Choose a post–Civil War court case dealing with racial equality issues (the American Civil Liberties Union and other organizations as well as the federal government maintain catalogues of important cases). In what ways does the case you have chosen reflect the *Dred Scott* case and the constitutional amendments passed in response? Assess the continuing legacy of this case in American life and justice.

state supreme court rejected this argument in 1852, Scott, with the help of abolitionist lawyers, appealed to the United States Supreme Court. In a seven-to-two decision, the Court ruled against Scott. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, formerly a member of Andrew Jackson's Cabinet and a stalwart Democrat, argued that in the eyes of the law, slaves were not citizens but property, and as such they had no right to petition a federal court. Taney then ignited a political powder keg by ruling that Congress had no constitutional authority to limit slavery in a federal territory, thereby declaring the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, the Kansas issue still burned. That very few slaveholders actually moved into the territory did nothing to deter proslavery leaders, who met in Lecompton, Kansas, in June 1857 to draft a state constitution favoring slavery. When the **Lecompton constitution** was submitted for voters' approval, antislavery forces protested by refusing to vote, so it was easily ratified. But when it was revealed that more than two thousand nonresidents had voted illegally, both Republicans and northern Democrats in Congress roundly denounced it. The Buchanan administration joined southerners in support of admitting Kansas to the Union as a slave state and managed to push the statehood bill through the Senate, but the House of Representatives rejected it. Congress then returned the Lecompton constitution to Kansas for another vote. This time Free-Soilers participated in the election and defeated the proposed constitution. Kansas remained a territory.

The Kansas controversy proved a hard pill for Douglas to swallow. He believed in popular sovereignty but could not support the fraudulent election that brought the Lecompton constitution to Congress for approval. And the *Dred Scott* decision had virtually nullified his pet solution by ruling that even popular sovereignty could not exclude slavery from a territory. Still entertaining presidential ambitions, Douglas sought a

**Lecompton constitution** State constitution written for Kansas in 1857 at a convention dominated by proslavery forces; it would have allowed slavery, but Kansas voters rejected it.

**Abraham Lincoln** Illinois lawyer and politician who argued against popular sovereignty in debates with Stephen Douglas in 1858; he lost the senatorial election to Douglas but was elected president in 1860.

**Freeport Doctrine** Stephen Douglas's belief, stated at Freeport, Illinois, that a territory could exclude slavery by writing local laws or regulations that made slavery impossible to enforce.

**Harpers Ferry** Town in present-day West Virginia and site of the U.S. arsenal that John Brown briefly seized in 1859.

**Robert E. Lee** A Virginian with a distinguished career in the U.S. Army who resigned to assume command of the Confederate army in Virginia when the Civil War began.

**secession** Withdrawal from the United States.

solution that might win him both northern and southern support in a run for the office in 1860. His immediate goal, however, was reelection to the Senate.

Illinois Republicans selected **Abraham Lincoln** to run against Douglas for the Senate in 1858. Born on the Kentucky frontier in 1809, Lincoln had accompanied his family from one failed farm to another, picking up schooling in Indiana and Illinois as opportunities arose. As a young man he worked odd jobs—farm worker, ferryman, flatboatman, surveyor, and store clerk—and was a member of the Illinois militia during the Black Hawk War in 1832. Two years after the war, Lincoln was elected to the Illinois legislature and began a serious study of law. He was admitted to the Illinois state bar in 1836. A strong Whig, Lincoln followed Henry Clay's economic philosophy and steered a middle course between the "cotton" and "conscience" wings of the Whig Party. Lincoln acknowledged that slavery was evil but contended that it was the unavoidable consequence of black racial inferiority. The only way to get rid of the evil, he believed, was to prevent the expansion of slavery into the territories, forcing it to die out naturally, and then make arrangements to separate the two races forever, either by transporting blacks to Africa or creating a segregated space for them in the Americas.

Lincoln was decidedly the underdog in the contest with Douglas and sought to improve his chances by challenging the senator to a series of debates about slavery and its expansion. Douglas agreed to seven debates in various parts of the state. During the debate at Freeport, Lincoln asked Douglas to explain how the people of a territory could exclude slavery in light of the *Dred Scott* ruling. Douglas's reply became known as the **Freeport Doctrine**. Slavery, he said, needed the protection of "local police regulations." In any territory, citizens opposed to slavery could elect representatives who would "by unfriendly legislation" prevent the introduction of slavery. Lincoln did not win Douglas's Senate seat, but the debate drew national attention to the Illinois race, and Lincoln won recognition as an up-and-coming Republican force.

If moderate Republicans like Lincoln denounced Chief Justice Taney's decision, more radical northerners increasingly called for the violent overthrow of slavery, and Kansas zealot John Brown moved to oblige them. In 1857 Brown came to the East, where he convinced several prominent antislavery leaders to finance a daring plan to raise an army of slaves in an all-out insurrection against their masters. Brown and a small party of followers attacked the federal arsenal at **Harpers Ferry**, Virginia, on October 16, 1859, attempting to seize weapons. The arsenal proved an easy target, but no slaves joined the uprising. Local citizens surrounded the arsenal, firing on Brown and his followers until federal troops commanded by Colonel **Robert E. Lee** arrived. On October 18, Lee's forces battered down the barricaded entrance and arrested Brown. He was tried, convicted of treason, and hanged on December 2, 1859.

Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry captured the imagination of radical abolitionists. Republican leaders denounced it, but other northerners proclaimed Brown a martyr. Church bells tolled in many northern cities on the day of his execution. In New England, Ralph Waldo Emerson proclaimed Brown "that new saint." Such reactions caused many appalled southerners—even extreme moderates—to seriously consider **secession**. In Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida, state legislatures resolved that a Republican victory in the upcoming presidential election would provide sufficient justification for such action.

### The Dominance of Sectionalism

During the Buchanan administration, Democrats found it increasingly difficult to achieve national party unity. Facing Republican pressure in their own states, northern Democrats realized that any concession to southern Democratic



Hoping to trigger a full-scale revolt against slavery, or perhaps even a civil war, Kansas radical John Brown seized the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, on October 16, 1859. As shown here, a military force led by then Colonel Robert E. Lee finally overcame Brown and his volunteer army. Taken prisoner, Brown was eventually tried for treason and was hanged in the following December. Many proclaimed him martyr, and his name became a rallying cry for those who sought an immediate end to slavery.

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demands for extending or protecting slavery would cost them votes at home. In April 1860, as the party convened in Charleston, South Carolina, each side was ready to do battle for its political life.

The fight began when northern supporters of Stephen A. Douglas championed a popular sovereignty position. Southern radicals demanded a plank calling for the legal protection of slavery in the territories. When the majority voted instead to endorse popular sovereignty, angry delegates from eight southern states walked out of the convention. Shocked, the remaining delegates adjourned; they would reconvene in Baltimore in June. Most southern delegates boycotted the Baltimore proceedings, and Douglas finally won the Democratic presidential nomination. The southern Democratic contingent met one week later, also in Baltimore, and nominated Vice President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky as its presidential candidate and vowed support for the Union but called for federal protection of the right to own slaves in the territories and for the preservation of slavery where it already existed.

In May 1860, a group of former Whigs and Know-Nothings convened in Baltimore and formed the **Constitutional Union Party**. They nominated John Bell, a former southern Know-Nothing and wealthy slaveholder from Tennessee, for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts, a former Whig leader, as his running mate. Hoping to resurrect the politics of compromise, the party resolved to take no stand on the sectional controversy and pledged to uphold the Constitution and the Union and to enforce the laws of the nation.

Having lost most of its moderates to the Constitutional Union coalition and having virtually no southerners in its ranks to start with, the Republican convention faced few ideological divisions, but personality conflicts were rife. The front-runner for the Republican nomination appeared to be William Seward of New York. A former Whig and long-time New York politician, Seward had actively opposed any extension of slavery during the early 1850s. Eventually, however, Illinois's favorite son Abraham Lincoln emerged as Seward's major competition. Many delegates considered Seward too radical. Moreover,

**Constitutional Union Party** Political party that organized on the eve of the Civil War with no platform other than preservation of the Constitution, the Union, and the law.

he and his campaign manager, Thurlow Weed, had earned the distrust of many prominent Republicans for their political wheeling and dealing. Lincoln, in contrast, had a reputation for integrity and had not seriously alienated any of the Republican factions. He won the nomination on the third ballot.

## The Divided Nation

### ★ How did the realignment of the political party system during the 1850s contribute to the conduct and results of the presidential election in 1860?

### ★ Why did the election results have the political effects that they did?

The Republicans were a new phenomenon on the American political scene: a purely regional political party. Rather than making any attempt to forge a national coalition, the party drew its strength and ideas almost entirely from the North. The Republican platform—“Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Men”—stressed the defilement of white labor by slavery and contended that the Slave Power conspiracy was eroding the rights of free whites everywhere. By taking up a cry against “Rum, Romanism, and Slavery,” the Republicans drew former Know-Nothings and temperance advocates into their ranks. The Democrats hoped to maintain a national coalition, but as the nation approached a new presidential election, their hopes began to fade.

### The Election of 1860

**Deep South** The region of the South farthest from the North, usually said to comprise the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

The 1860 presidential campaign began as several separate contests. Lincoln and Douglas competed for northern votes; the Republicans were not even on the ballot in the **Deep South**.

Douglas proclaimed himself the only national candidate but received most of his support from northerners who feared the consequences of a Republican victory. By the same token, Breckinridge and the southern Democrats expected no support in the North. Bell and the Constitutional Unionists attempted to campaign in both regions but attracted mostly southern voters anxious to stave off the crisis of disunion.

Slavery and sectionalism were the key issues. Even when a congressional investigation revealed evidence of graft, bribery, and shady dealings in the Buchanan administration, Republicans linked these charges to the supposed Slave Power conspiracy. The slaveholding elite, they contended, not only had attempted to subvert liberty but had used fraudulent means to keep the Democratic Party of Buchanan—and Douglas—in power. “Honest Abe Lincoln,” the man of the people, would lead the fight against the forces of slavery and corruption. This argument drew in many northern voters, including a lot of former Know-Nothings.

As election day drew near, the likelihood of a Republican victory deeply alarmed southerners. Even moderate southerners started to believe that the Republicans intended to crush their way of life and to enslave southern whites economically while freeing southern blacks. Northern qualms were aroused as well when the pro-Democrat *New York Herald* contended that the election of Lincoln would bring “hundreds of thousands” of slaves north to compete with whites for jobs, resulting in “African amalgamation with the fair daughters of the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Teutonic races.” Seeking to counter such scare tactics, national Republican leaders forged a platform that advocated limits on slavery’s expansion but contained no planks seeking an end to slavery in areas where it already existed.

On November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States with 180 electoral votes—a clear majority—but only 40 percent of the popular vote. Lincoln carried all the northern states, California, and Oregon. Douglas finished second with 29 percent of the popular vote but just 12 electoral votes. He won only Missouri. Bell won the 39 electoral votes of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Breckinridge, as expected, carried the Deep South but tallied only 72 electoral votes and 18 percent of the popular vote nationwide. For the first time in American history, a purely regional party held the presidency.

### The First Wave of Secession

After the Republican victory, southern sentiment for secession snowballed, especially in the Deep South. The Republicans were a “party founded on a single sentiment,” stated the *Richmond Examiner*: “hatred of African slavery.” The *New Orleans Delta* agreed, calling the Republicans “essentially a revolutionary party.” But this party now controlled the White House. To a growing number of southerners, the Republican victory was proof that secession was the only alternative to political domination.

In a last-ditch attempt at compromise, **John J. Crittenden** proposed a block of permanent constitutional amendments—amendments that could never be repealed—to the Senate on December 18, 1860. He suggested extending the Missouri Compromise line westward across the continent, forbidding slavery north of the line, and protecting slavery to the south. Crittenden’s plan also upheld the interstate trade in slaves and called for compensation to slaveowners who were unable to recover fugitive slaves from northern states. Although this plan favored the South, it had some appeal in the North, especially among businessmen who feared that secession would cause a major depression. Thurlow Weed, Seward’s political adviser, was ready to listen to such a compromise, but Lincoln was “inflexible on the territorial question.” The extension of the Missouri Compromise line, Lincoln warned, would “lose us everything we gained by the election.” He let senators and congressmen know that he wanted no “compromise in regard to the extension of slavery.” The Senate defeated Crittenden’s proposals by a vote of 25 to 23. The Kentuckian then proposed putting the measure to a vote of the people, but Congress rejected that idea as well.

Meanwhile, on December 20, 1860, delegates in South Carolina met to consider seceding from the Union. South Carolina had long been a hotbed of resistance to federal authority, and state officials were determined to take action to protect slavery before the newly elected Republican administration came to power. Amid general jubilation, South Carolina delegates voted unanimously to dissolve their ties with the United States. Just as the radicals hoped, other southern states followed. During January 1861, delegates convened in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana and voted to secede (see Map 13.3).

On February 4, 1861, delegates from the six seceding states met in Montgomery, Alabama, and formed the provisional government for the **Confederate States of America**. During the several weeks that followed, the provisional congress drafted a constitution, and the six Confederate states ratified it on March 11, 1861.

The Confederate constitution emphasized the “sovereign and independent character” of the states and guaranteed the protection of slavery in any new territories acquired. It allowed tariffs solely for the purpose of raising government revenue and prohibited government funding of internal improvements. It also limited the president and vice president to a single six-year term. A cabinet composed of six executive department heads

**John J. Crittenden** Kentucky senator who made an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Civil War by proposing a series of constitutional amendments protecting slavery south of the Missouri Compromise line.

**Confederate States of America** Political entity formed by the seceding states of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana in February 1861; Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined later.



**MAP 13.3 The United States and the Confederate States of America**

This map shows the breakup of the Union begun by South Carolina's secession in December 1860. The Cotton Belt followed South Carolina's lead in January, and the rest of the confederate states joined them later in the spring of 1861.

rounded out the executive branch. In all other respects, the Confederate government was identical to that in the United States. In fact, the U.S. Constitution was acknowledged as the supreme law in the Confederacy except in those particulars where it conflicted with provisions in the Confederate Constitution.

### Responses to Disunion

Even as late as March 1861, not all southerners favored secession. John Bell and Stephen Douglas together had received more than 50 percent of southern votes in 1860, winning support from southerners who desired compromise and had only

limited stakes in upholding slavery. These “plain folk” joined together with some large planters, who stood to suffer economic loss from disunion, in calls for moderation and compromise. And the border states, which were less invested in cotton and had numerous ties with the North, were not strongly inclined toward secession. In February, Virginia had called for a peace conference to meet in Washington in an effort to forestall hostilities, but this attempt, like Crittenden’s effort, also failed to hold the Union together.

# Investigating America

## Alexander Stephens's Cornerstone Speech, 1861

Alexander Stephens had previously supported his old friend Stephen A. Douglas for the presidency and opposed secession after the election of Lincoln. But he had always been a strong supporter of slavery, and after the Montgomery convention chose him to serve as Davis's Vice President, Stephens delivered a lengthy, extemporaneous speech in Savannah, Georgia, on March 21, 1861. After explaining the virtues of the Confederate constitution regarding tariffs and internal improvements, he turned to the question of slavery, which gave the speech its name.

.....

The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution—African slavery as it exists amongst us—the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution. Jefferson in his forecast, had anticipated this, as the “rock upon which the old Union would split.” He was right. What was conjecture with him, is now a realized fact. But whether he fully comprehended the great truth upon which that rock stood and stands, may be doubted. The prevailing ideas entertained by him and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with, but the general opinion of the men of that day was that, somehow or other in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent and pass away. This idea, though not incorporated in the constitution, was the prevailing idea at that time. The constitution, it is true, secured every essential guarantee to the institution while it should last, and hence no argument can be justly urged against the constitutional guarantees thus secured, because of the common sentiment of the day. Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. It was a sandy foundation, and the

government built upon it fell when the “storm came and the wind blew.”

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like all other truths in the various departments of science. It has been so even amongst us. Many who hear me, perhaps, can recollect well, that this truth was not generally admitted, even within their day. The errors of the past generation still clung to many as late as twenty years ago. Those at the North, who still cling to these errors, with a zeal above knowledge, we justly denominate fanatics. All fanaticism springs from an aberration of the mind—from a defect in reasoning. It is a species of insanity. One of the most striking characteristics of insanity, in many instances, is forming correct conclusions from fancied or erroneous premises; so with the anti-slavery fanatics. Their conclusions are right if their premises were. They assume that the negro is equal, and hence conclude that he is entitled to equal privileges and rights with the white man.

- .....
- William Seward spoke of an “irrepressible conflict” between the free wage labor system of the northern states and the slave labor of the South. What do Stephens’s speech and Frederick Douglass’s Fourth of July Oration, excerpted earlier in this chapter, suggest regarding Seward’s prophecy?
  - How could both Stephens and Douglass be so certain in their views yet remain part of the same country? And if Lincoln’s party included no platform statements calling for immediate emancipation in the southern states, why did planters like Stephens and Davis regard the Republicans as such a danger to their way of life?



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primary source  
activities.

The division in southern sentiments was a major stumbling block to the election of a Confederate president. Many moderate delegates to the constitutional convention refused to support radical secessionists, believing them to be equally responsible with the Republicans for initiating the crisis. The convention remained deadlocked until two pro-secession Virginia legislators nominated Mississippi moderate Jefferson Davis as a compromise candidate.

Davis, austere and dignified, appeared to be the ideal choice. He had not sought the job but seemed extremely capable of handling it. He was a West Point graduate; he served during the War with Mexico, was elected to the Senate soon afterward, then left the Senate in 1851 to run unsuccessfully for governor in Mississippi. After serving as secretary of war under Franklin Pierce, he returned to the Senate in 1857. Although Davis had long championed southern interests and owned many slaves, he was no romantic, fire-eating secessionist. Before 1860 he had been a strong **Unionist**, arguing only that the South be allowed to maintain its own economy, culture, and institutions, including slavery. Like many of his contemporaries, however, Davis had become increasingly alarmed by the prospect of declining southern political power. Immediately after Mississippi's declaration of secession, Davis resigned his Senate seat and threw in with the Confederacy.

Davis was elected provisional president of the Confederate States of America unanimously on February 9, 1861. He addressed the cheering crowds in Montgomery a week later and set forth the Confederate position: "The time for compromise has now passed," he said. "The South is determined to maintain her position, and make all who oppose her smell Southern powder and feel Southern steel." In his inaugural address several days later, he stressed a desire for peace but reiterated that the "courage and patriotism of the Confederate States" would be "found equal to any measure of defense which honor and security may require."

Northern Democrats and Republicans alike watched developments in the South with dismay. President Buchanan argued that secession had no constitutional validity and that any state leaving the Union did so unlawfully. He confused the issue, however, by stating his belief that the federal government had no constitutional power to "coerce a State" to remain in the Union. He blamed the crisis on "incessant and violent agitation on the slavery question," chiding northern states for disregarding fugitive slave laws and calling for a constitutional amendment protecting slavery.

Waiting to assume the office he had just won, Lincoln wrestled with the twin problems of what he would do about secession and slavery. But Lincoln first had to unite his party. In an attempt to appease all the Republican factions, he chose his cabinet with great care. His vice president, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, had supported Lincoln but was also a friend of William Seward and had been chosen to balance the ticket factionally. Lincoln continued this balancing act by appointing to his cabinet his four main rivals for party control. Seward received the job of secretary of state. Moderate Edward Bates of Missouri became attorney general. Although many Republicans considered Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania to be "destitute of honor and integrity," Lincoln reluctantly named him secretary of war in the interest of appeasing Cameron's supporters and maintaining party unity. Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, a longtime politician and sometime radical on the slavery question, became secretary of the Treasury. Despite Lincoln's evenhandedness, his political balancing act was not easy to maintain. Chase and Seward, for instance, had a long history of political infighting and hated each other. That Lincoln would appoint Chase to any position so angered Seward that he threatened to resign, and Lincoln had to persuade him to remain.

**Unionist** Loyal to the United States of America.

## The Nation Dissolved

- ★ What problems confronted Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis in March 1861?
- ★ How did their actions contribute to the escalating national crisis?

Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861. In his inaugural address he repeated themes that he had been stressing since the election: no interference with slavery in states where it existed, no extension of slavery into the territories, and no tolerance of secession. “The Union,” he contended, was “perpetual.” Lincoln believed that the nation remained unbroken, and he pledged to see “that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States.” This policy, he continued, necessitated “no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none, unless it is forced upon the national authority. The power confided in me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts.” If war came, he argued, it would be over secession, not slavery, for the federal government had a duty to maintain the Union by any means, including force.

### Lincoln, Sumter, and War

Lincoln’s first presidential address drew mixed reactions. Most Republicans found it firm and reasonable, applauding its tone. Union advocates in both the North and the South thought the speech held promise for the future. Even former

rival Stephen Douglas stated, “I am with him.” Moderate southerners commended Lincoln’s “temperance and conservatism” and believed the speech was all “any reasonable Southern man” could have expected. Confederates and their sympathizers, however, branded the speech a “Declaration of War.” Lincoln had hoped the address would foster a climate of reconciliation, show his commitment to maintaining the Union, and demonstrate his determination to find a peaceful solution, for he desperately needed time to organize the new government and formulate a plan of action. But such luxuries were not forthcoming.

Even before Lincoln assumed office, South Carolina officials had ordered the state militia to seize two federal forts—Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney—and the federal arsenal at Charleston. In response, Major Robert Anderson had moved all federal troops from Charleston to **Fort Sumter**, an island stronghold in Charleston Harbor. Immediately after taking office in March, Lincoln received a report from Fort Sumter that supplies were running low. Under great pressure from northern public opinion to do something without starting a war, he informed South Carolina governor Francis Pickens of his peaceful intention to send unarmed boats carrying food and supplies to the besieged fort. Lincoln thus placed the Confederacy in a no-win position: If Pickens accepted the resupply of federal forts he would lose face, but firing on an unarmed ship would be sufficiently dishonorable to justify stronger federal action. Confederate officials were determined to beat Lincoln to the punch. President Davis ordered the Confederate commander at Charleston to demand the evacuation of Sumter and, if the federals refused, to “proceed, in such a manner as you may determine, to reduce it.” On April 11, while the supply ships were still on their way, Anderson was ordered to surrender. When Anderson rejected the ultimatum on the following day, shore **batteries** opened fire on the island fortress. After a thirty-four-hour artillery battle, Anderson surrendered. Neither side had inflicted casualties on the other, but civil war had officially begun.

**Fort Sumter** Fort at the mouth of the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina; it was the scene of the opening engagement of the Civil War in April 1861.

**battery** An army artillery unit, usually supplied with heavy guns.

In this vivid engraving, South Carolina shore batteries under the command of P. G. T. Beauregard shell Fort Sumter, the last federal stronghold in Charleston Harbor, on the night of April 12, 1861. Curious and excited civilians look on from their rooftops, never suspecting the horrors that would be the outcome of this rash action. North Wind Picture Archives.



Across the North, newspapers contrasted the president's resolute but restrained policy with the violent aggression of the Confederates, and the public rallied behind the Union cause. In New York City, where southern sympathizers had once vehemently criticized abolitionist actions, a million people attended a Union rally. Even northern Democrats rallied behind the Republican president, hearkening to Stephen Douglas's statement that "there can be no neutrals in this war, only patriots—or traitors." Spurred by the public outcry and confident of support, Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand militiamen to be mobilized "to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our National Union, and the perpetuity of popular government." Northern states responded immediately and enthusiastically. Across the Upper South and the border regions, however, the call to arms meant that a decision had to be made: whether to continue in the Union or join the Confederacy.

### Choosing Sides in Virginia

The need for southern unity in the face of what he saw as northern aggression pushed Jefferson Davis to employ a combination of political finesse and force to create a solid southern alignment. He selected his cabinet with this in mind, choosing one cabinet member from each state except his own Mississippi and appointing men of varying degrees of radicalism. But unity among the seven seceding states was only one of Davis's worries. A perhaps more pressing concern was alignment among the eight slave states that remained in the Union. These states were critical, for they contained more than half of the entire southern population (two-thirds of its white population), possessed most of the South's industrial capacity, produced most of its food, and raised more than half of its horses. In addition, many experienced and able military leaders lived in these states. If the Confederacy was to have any chance of survival, the human and physical resources of the whole South were essential.

It was not Davis's appeal for solidarity but Lincoln's call to mobilize the militia that won most of the other slave states for the Confederate cause. In Virginia, Governor John

Letcher refused to honor Lincoln's demand for troops, and on April 17 a special convention declared for secession. Voters in Virginia overwhelmingly ratified this decision in a popular referendum on May 23. By then Letcher had offered **Richmond** as a site for the new nation's capital. The Confederate congress accepted the offer in order to strengthen ties with Virginia and because facilities in Montgomery were less than adequate.

Not all Virginians were flattered at becoming the seat for the Confederacy. Residents of the western portion of the state had strong Union ties and longstanding political differences with their neighbors east of the Allegheny Mountains. Forty-six counties called mass Unionist meetings to protest the state's secession, and in a June convention at Wheeling, they elected their own governor, Francis H. Pierpoint, and drew up a constitution. The document was ratified in an election open only to voters willing to take an oath of allegiance to the Union. Eastern Virginians considered the entire process illegal, but the West Virginia legislature finally convened in May 1862 and requested admission to the United States.

For many individuals in the Upper South, the decision to support the Confederacy was not an easy one. Virginian Robert E. Lee, for example, was deeply devoted to the Union. A West Point graduate and career officer in the U.S. Army, he had a distinguished record in the war with Mexico and as superintendent of West Point. But his marriage to Mary Custis, the great-granddaughter of Martha Washington, gave him control of 196 slaves on Mary's Arlington plantation. When Lincoln offered Lee field command of the Union armies, the Virginian refused, deciding that he should serve his native state instead. He resigned his U.S. Army commission in April 1861. When he informed Winfield Scott, a personal friend and fellow Virginian, of his decision, Scott replied, "You have made the greatest mistake of your life, but I feared it would be so." Scott chose to remain loyal to the Union.

### Trouble Along the Border

Influenced by Virginia and by Lee's decision, three other states joined the Confederacy. Arkansas seceded on May 6, and North Carolina followed on May 20. Tennessee, the eleventh and final state to join the Confederacy, was the home of many moderates, including John Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate in 1860. Eastern residents favored the Union, and those in the west favored the Confederacy. The state's voters at first rejected disunion overwhelmingly, but after the fighting began, Governor Isham C. Harris and the state legislature initiated military ties with the Confederacy, forcing another vote on the issue. Western voters carried the election, approving the agreement and seceding from the Union on June 8. East Tennesseans, who remained loyal Unionists, tried to divide the state much as West Virginians had done, but Davis ordered Confederate troops to occupy the region, thwarting the effort.

Four slave states remained in the Union, and the start of hostilities brought political and military confrontation in three of the four. Delaware quietly stayed in the Union. Voters there had given Breckinridge a plurality in 1860, but the majority of voters disapproved of secession, and few of the state's citizens owned slaves. Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky, however, each contained large, vocal secessionist minorities and appeared poised to bolt to the Confederacy.

Maryland was particularly vital to the Union, for it enclosed Washington, D.C., on the three sides not bordered by Virginia. If Maryland were to secede, the Union would be forced to move its capital. When a Baltimore mob attacked federal troops with bricks and bottles, Lincoln and General Scott ordered the military occupation of the city and declared **martial law**.

**Richmond** Port city on the James River in Virginia; already the state capital, it became the capital of the Confederacy.

**martial law** Temporary rule by military authorities, imposed on a civilian population in time of war or when civil authority has broken down.

The state legislature finally met and voted to remain neutral. Lincoln then instructed the army to arrest suspected southern sympathizers and hold them without formal hearings or charges. When the legislature met again and appeared to be planning secession, Lincoln ordered the army to surround Frederick, the legislative seat—just as Davis had dispatched Confederate troops to occupy eastern Tennessee. With southern sympathizers suppressed, new state elections were held. The new legislature, overwhelmingly Unionist, voted against secession.

Kentucky had important economic ties to the South but was strongly nationalistic. Like Kentuckians Henry Clay and John Crittenden, most in the state favored compromise. The governor refused to honor Lincoln's call for troops, but the state legislature voted to remain neutral. Both the North and the South honored that neutrality. Kentucky's own militia, however, split into two factions, and the state became a bloody battleground where even members of the same family fought against one another.

In Missouri, Governor Claiborne F. Jackson, a former proslavery border ruffian, pushed for secession arguing that Missourians were bound together “in one brotherhood with the States of the South.” When Unionists frustrated the secession movement, Jackson's forces seized the federal arsenal at Liberty and wrote to Jefferson Davis requesting artillery to support an assault on the arsenal at St. Louis. Union sympathizers fielded their own forces and fought Jackson at every turn. Like Kentucky, however, Missouri contributed a significant number of men to the Confederate Army; both states had stars in the U.S. and Confederate flags.

## Summary

The presidential election in 1848 raised regional tension and debates, and then the Compromise of 1850 failed to alleviate them. Slavery dominated the political agenda. The Whig Party, strained by fragmentation among its factions, disintegrated, and two completely new groups—the Know-Nothings and the Republicans—competed to replace it. A series of events, including the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the *Dred Scott* decision, intensified regional polarization, and radicals on both sides fanned the flames of sectional rivalry.

The new regional political coalitions of the 1850s more accurately reflected the changed composition of the electorate, but their intense commitment to regional interests left them far less able than their more nationally oriented predecessors to achieve compromise. Even the Democratic Party could not hold together, splitting into northern and southern wings. By 1859, the young Republican Party, committed to restricting slavery's expansion, was poised to gain control of the federal government. Fearing that the loss of political power would doom their way of life, southern planters recoiled in terror. Neither side believed it could afford to back down.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, six southern states withdrew from the Union. Last-minute efforts at compromise, such as the Crittenden proposal, failed, and on April 12, 1861, five weeks after Lincoln's inauguration, Confederate forces fired on federal troops at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Lincoln's constituency, certain that secession was illegal, expected action, but the president's options were limited by the varied ideologies of his supporters. Similarly, Jefferson Davis and the newly created Confederacy faced problems resulting from disagreement about secession. But Lincoln believed that he had to call the nation to arms, and this move forced wavering states to choose sides. Internal divisions in Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri brought further violence and military action. Before summer, a second wave of secession finally solidified the lineup, and the boundary lines, between the two competing societies. The stakes were set, the division was complete: The nation was poised for the bloodiest war in its history.

## Key Terms

- Sojourner Truth, *p. 300*  
Liberty Party, *p. 301*  
popular sovereignty, *p. 301*  
Know-Nothings, *p. 301*  
nativist, *p. 301*  
xenophobic, *p. 301*  
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# CHAPTER 14

# A Violent Choice: Civil War 1861–1865

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### ***The Politics of War***

- Union Policies and Objectives
- Confederate Policies and Objectives
- The Diplomatic Front
- The Union's First Attack

### ***From Bull Run to Antietam***

- Struggle for the Mississippi
- Lee's Aggressive Defense of Virginia
- Lee's Invasion of Maryland
- Diplomacy and the Politics of Emancipation

### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, 1862**

### ***The Human Dimensions of the War***

- Instituting the Draft
- Wartime Economy in the North and South
- Women in Two Nations at War
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Susie King Taylor, 1899**
- Free Blacks, Slaves, and War
- Life and Death at the Front

### ***Waging Total War***

- Lincoln's Generals and Southern Successes
- Grant, Sherman, and the Invention of Total War

### **IT MATTERS: The Gettysburg Address**

- The Election of 1864 and Sherman's March to the Sea
- The End of Lee and Lincoln

### ***Summary***

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### **INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: Susie King Taylor**

Born a slave in 1848, young Susie Baker attended an illegal school for slave children in Savannah, Georgia, where, by the age of 14, she had learned everything her teachers could offer. Then war came. Early in 1862 Union forces attacked the Georgia coast. Fearful of what the future might hold, many slaves left the city. Eventually a Union gunboat picked up Susie and a number of “**contrabands**” and ferried them to a Yankee encampment on St. Simon’s Island. Before long the community of displaced former slaves exceeded six hundred. Discovering that Susie could read and write, Union officials asked her to open a school, the first legally sanctioned school for African Americans in Georgia.

At St. Simon’s, Susie met and then married another contraband named Edward King. Like many in the camp, King wanted to fight for his freedom. Finally, Captain C. T. Trowbridge arrived on the island with a request for volunteers. Though they were offered no pay, no uniforms, and no official recognition, King and his friends eagerly joined up. Trowbridge drilled them during the day while Susie tutored them at night. Finally, in October, the brigade got uniforms and official recognition (though still no pay) and went off to war. Susie went with them.

She spent the rest of the war traveling with the troops, tending to their wounds, their clothes, and their minds; in her words, she “did not fear shell or shot, cared for the sick and dying; camped and fared as the boys did.” Then the war ended, and her husband died. She taught school for a time, and though she eventually remarried and settled in the North, she never forgot her wartime experiences.

“These things should be kept in history before the people,” she declared, and she made it her business to tell the story. “There has never been a greater war in the United States than the one of 1861, where so many lives were lost—not men alone but noble women as well.” Her efforts and those of people like her, people who made hard choices and wrenching sacrifices, had wrought a new era. “What a wonderful revolution!” she concluded.

#### **SUSIE KING TAYLOR**

*Born a slave in rural Georgia, Susie King Taylor attended an illegal school for slaves in antebellum Savannah. After the outbreak of the Civil War, she fled to safety among the Union forces and founded a school for other “contrabands.” When her husband, Edward King, joined an all-black regiment fighting for their freedom, Susie accompanied him, serving as a nurse, aide, and continuing as a teacher. Following the war she became a leading voice in advocating racial equality and educational opportunity for all people.*

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. [LC-USZ61-1863].



# Chronology

<b>1861</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lincoln takes office and runs Union by executive authority until July</li> <li>Fort Sumter falls</li> <li>Battle of Bull Run</li> <li>Mclellan organizes the Union army</li> <li>Union naval blockade begins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg</li> <li>Draft riots in New York City</li> <li>World's first subway opens in London</li> </ul>
<b>1862</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant's victories in Mississippi Valley</li> <li>Battle of Shiloh</li> <li>U.S. Navy captures New Orleans</li> <li>Peninsular Campaign</li> <li>Battle of Antietam</li> <li>African Americans permitted in Union army</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant invades Virginia</li> <li>Sherman captures Atlanta</li> <li>Lincoln reelected</li> <li>Sherman's March to the Sea</li> <li>Congress passes the Thirteenth Amendment</li> <li>Red Cross founded in Geneva</li> </ul>
<b>1863</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emancipation Proclamation takes effect</li> <li>Union enacts conscription</li> <li>Battle of Chancellorsville and death of Stonewall Jackson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1865 Sherman's march through the Carolinas</li> <li>Lee abandons Petersburg and Richmond</li> <li>Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse</li> <li>Lincoln proposes a gentle reconstruction policy</li> <li>Lincoln is assassinated</li> <li>Salvation Army founded in London</li> </ul>

To Taylor's mind, the mind of a former slave, it was the liberation of the slaves that marked the Civil War's "revolutionary" character. But at the outbreak of war, that revolution was only in the minds of a handful of radicals. When Jefferson Davis and southerner leaders spoke of a revolution, it was against a domineering North that they compared to the England of George III. Lincoln, meanwhile, spoke of a revolution being waged by a rebellious South that would destroy the Union and the Constitution with it.

Many shared the perception that this was a revolutionary moment, but disillusionment seemed to wait behind every event. The South would find it more and more difficult to withstand the superior manpower and resources controlled by the Union. And the North would suffer frustrations of its own as President Lincoln's generals let opportunity after opportunity slip by. In desperation, Lincoln would finally redefine the war by invoking Taylor's revolutionary cause, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. From that point forward, hopes for a peaceful resolution evaporated: both sides would demand total victory or total destruction.

**contrabands** Term coined by Gen. Benjamin F. Butler to describe fugitive slaves who sought refuge among Union troops in the South.

## The Politics of War

- ★ **What problems did Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis face as they led their respective nations into war?**
- ★ **What role did European nations play during the opening years of the war?**

Running the war posed complex problems for both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. At the outset, neither side had the experience, soldiers, or supplies to wage an effective war; and foreign diplomacy and international trade were vital to both. But perhaps the biggest

challenge confronting both Davis and Lincoln was internal politics. Lincoln had to contend not only with northern Democrats and southern sympathizers but also with divisions in his own party. Not all Republicans agreed with the president's war aims. Davis also faced internal political problems. The Confederate constitution guaranteed a great deal of autonomy to the Confederate states, and each state had a different opinion about war strategy and national objectives.

### Union Policies and Objectives

Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office in March 1861, but Congress did not convene until July. This delay placed Lincoln in an awkward position. The Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the power "to declare war" and "to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection, and repel invasions." The secession of the southern states and the imminent threat to federal authority at Fort Sumter, however, required an immediate response.

In effect, Lincoln ruled by executive proclamation for three months, vastly expanding the wartime powers of the presidency. Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand militiamen from the states to put down the rebellion. And ignoring specific constitutional provisions, he suspended the civil rights of citizens in Maryland when it appeared likely that the border state would join the Confederacy. At various times during the war, Lincoln would resort to similar invasions of civil liberties when he felt that dissent threatened either domestic security or the Union cause.

Having assumed nearly absolute authority, Lincoln faced the need to rebuild an army in disarray. When hostilities broke out, the Union had only sixteen thousand men in uniform, and nearly one-third of the officers resigned to support the Confederacy. What military leadership remained was aged: seven of the eight heads of army bureaus had been in the service since the War of 1812, including General in Chief Winfield Scott, who was 74 years old. Only two Union officers had ever commanded a **brigade**, and both were in their seventies. Weapons were old, and supplies were low. On May 3, Lincoln again exceeded his constitutional authority by calling for regular army recruits to meet the crisis. "Whether strictly legal or not," he asserted, such actions were based on "a popular demand, and a public necessity," and he expected "that Congress would readily ratify them."

Lincoln had also ordered the U.S. Navy to stop all incoming supplies to the states in rebellion. The naval blockade became an integral part of Union strategy. Although the Union navy had as few resources as did the army, leadership in the Navy Department quickly turned that situation around. Navy Secretary Gideon Welles purchased ships and built an effective navy that could both blockade the South and support land forces. By the end of 1861, the Union navy had 260 warships on the seas and a hundred more under construction.

The aged Winfield Scott drafted the initial Union military strategy. He ordered that the blockade of southern ports be combined with a strong Union thrust down the Mississippi River, the primary artery in the South's transportation system. This strategy would break the southern economy and split the Confederacy into two isolated parts. Scott believed that economic pressure would bring southern moderates forward to negotiate a settlement and perhaps return to the Union. However, this passive, diplomacy-oriented strategy did not appeal to war-fevered northerners who hungered for complete victory over those "arrogant southerners." The northern press ridiculed what it called the **anaconda plan**.

When Congress convened on July 4, 1861, Lincoln explained his actions and reminded congressmen that he had neither the constitutional authority to abolish slavery nor

**brigade** A military unit consisting of two or more regiments and composed of between 1,500 and 3,500 men.

**anaconda plan** Winfield Scott's plan (named after a snake that smothers prey in its coils) to blockade southern ports and take control of the Mississippi River, thus splitting the Confederacy and causing an economic collapse.

any intention of doing so. Rebellion, not slavery, had caused the crisis, he said, and the seceding states must be brought back into the Union, regardless of the cost. “Our popular government has been called an experiment,” he argued, and the point to be settled now was “its successful maintenance against a formidable internal attempt to overthrow it.” On July 22 and 25, 1861, both houses of Congress passed resolutions validating Lincoln’s actions.

This seemingly unified front lasted only a short time. Viewing social reformation as the correct objective, **Radical Republicans** pressured Congress to create a special committee to oversee the conduct of the war. Radical leader Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania growled, “If their whole country must be laid waste, and made a desert, in order to save this union, so let it be.” Stevens and the Radicals pressed for and passed a series of confiscation acts that inflicted severe penalties against individuals in rebellion. Treason was punishable by death, and anyone aiding the Confederacy was to be punished with imprisonment, attachment of property, and confiscation of slaves. All persons living in the eleven seceding states, whether loyal to the United States or not, were declared enemies of the Union and subject to the provisions of the law.

The Radicals splintered any consensus Lincoln might have achieved in his own party, and northern Democrats railed against his accumulation of power. To keep an unruly Congress from undermining his efforts, Lincoln shaped early Union strategy to appease all factions and used military appointments to smooth political feathers. His attitudes frequently enraged radical abolitionists, but Lincoln maintained his calm in the face of their criticism and merely reinforced his intentions. “What I do about slavery and the colored race,” he stated in 1862, “I do because it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.”

Nevertheless, Lincoln had far greater physical and human resources at his command than did the Confederates (see Table 14.1). The Union was home to more than twice as many people as the Confederacy, had vastly superior manufacturing and transportation systems, and enjoyed almost a monopoly in banking and foreign exchange. Lincoln also had a well-established government structure and formal diplomatic relations with other nations of the world. Still, these advantages could not help the war effort unless properly harnessed.

**Radical Republicans** Republican faction that tried to limit presidential power and enhance congressional authority during the Civil War; Radicals opposed any toleration of slavery.

### Confederate Policies and Objectives

At the start of the war, the Confederacy had no army, no navy, no war supplies, no government structure, no foreign alliances, and a political situation as ragged as the Union’s. Each Confederate state had its own ideas about the best way to conduct the war. After the attack on Fort Sumter, amassing supplies, troops, ships, and

**TABLE 14.1** Comparison of Union and Confederate Resources

	Union (23 States)	Confederacy (11 States)
Total population	20,700,000	9,105,000 <sup>a</sup>
Manufacturing establishments	110,000	18,000
Manufacturing workers	1,300,000	110,000
Miles of railroad	21,973	9,283
Troop strength (est.)	2,100,000	850,000

Source: Data from *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (1884–1888; reprinted ed., 1956).

<sup>a</sup>Includes 3,654,000 blacks, most of them slaves and not available for military duty.

war materials was the main task for Davis and his cabinet. Politics, however, influenced southern choices about where to field armies and who would direct them, how to run a war without offending state leaders, and how to pursue foreign diplomacy.

The Union naval blockade posed an immediate problem. The Confederacy had no navy and no capacity to build naval ships. Instead, the Confederates pinned their main hope of winning the war on the army. Fighting for honor was praiseworthy behavior in the South, and southerners, despite their disadvantages in manpower and resources, strongly believed they could “lick the Yankees.” Southern boys rushed to enlist to fight the northern “popinjays,” expecting a quick and glorious victory. Thousands volunteered before the Confederate war department was even organized. By the time Lincoln issued his call for seventy-five thousand militiamen, the Confederates already had sixty thousand men in uniform.

Despite this rush of fighting men, the South faced major handicaps. Even with the addition of the four Upper South states (Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas), as of 1860, the South built only 4 percent of all locomotives and only 3 percent of all firearms manufactured in the United States. The North produced almost all of the country’s cloth, **pig iron**, boots, and shoes. Early in the war, the South could produce enough food but lacked the means to transport it where it was needed. Quartermaster General Abraham Myers drew the mammoth task of producing and delivering tents, shoes, uniforms, blankets, horses, and wagons. All were in short supply.

The miracle worker in charge of supplying southern troops with weapons and ammunition was Josiah Gorgas, who became chief of **ordnance** in April 1861. Gorgas purchased arms from Europe while his ordnance officers bought or stole copper pots and tubing to make **percussion caps**, bronze church bells to make cannons, and lead weights to make bullets. He built factories and foundries to manufacture small arms. But despite his extraordinary skill, he could not supply all of the Confederate troops. When the Confederate congress authorized the enlistment of four hundred thousand additional volunteers in 1861, the war department had to turn away more than half of the enlistees because it lacked equipment for them.

Internal politics also plagued the Davis administration. First, he alienated his high-spirited populace by advocating a defensive war in the belief that counter attacking and yielding territory when necessary would buy time, making war so costly that the Union would give up. As one southern editor put it, the “idea of waiting for blows, instead of inflicting them is altogether unsuited to the genius of our people.” But even a defensive posture proved hard to maintain. Despite the shortage of arms, state governors hoarded weapons seized from federal arsenals for their own state militias and demanded that their states’ borders be protected, spreading troops dangerously thin. Politics also played a role in determining southern military leadership. Although the South had many more qualified officers at the beginning of the war than did the North, powerful state politicians with little military experience—such as Henry A. Wise of Virginia and Robert A. Toombs of Georgia—received appointments as generals.

### The Diplomatic Front

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the Confederacy was gaining international recognition and foreign aid. The primary focus of Confederate foreign policy was Great Britain.

For years, the South had been exporting huge amounts of cotton to Britain, and many southerners hoped that formal recognition of Confederate independence would immediately follow secession. Political and economic realities as well as ethical issues doomed them to disappointment. After all, the Union was still an

important player in international affairs, and the British were not going to risk offending the emerging industrial power without good cause. Also, many English voters were morally opposed to slavery and would have objected to an open alliance with the slaveholding Confederacy. Thus, while the British allowed southern agents to purchase ships and goods, they crafted a careful policy. On May 13, 1861, Queen Victoria proclaimed official neutrality but granted **belligerent status** to the South. This meant that Britain recognized the Confederates as responsible parties in a legitimate war, but did not recognize the Confederate States of America as yet ready to enter the international community.

The British pronouncement set the tone for other European responses and was much less than southerners had hoped for. It was also a major blow to the North, however, for Britain rejected Lincoln's position that the conflict was rebellion against duly authorized government. Lincoln could do little but accept British neutrality, for to provoke Britain might lead to full recognition of the Confederacy or to calls for arbitration of the conflict. At the same time, he cautiously continued efforts to block all incoming aid to the Confederacy. In November 1861, however, an incident at sea nearly scuttled British-American relations. James Murray Mason, the newly appointed Confederate emissary to London, and John Slidell, the Confederate minister to France, were traveling to their posts aboard the *Trent*, a British merchant ship bound for London. After the *Trent* left Havana, the U.S. warship *San Jacinto*, under the command of Captain Charles Wilkes, stopped the British ship. Wilkes had Mason, Slidell, and their staffs removed from the *Trent* and taken to Boston for confinement at Fort Warren.

Northerners celebrated the action and praised Wilkes, but the British were furious. They viewed the *Trent* affair as aggression against a neutral government, a violation of international law, and an affront to their national honor. President Lincoln, Secretary of State William Seward, and U.S. Ambassador to England Charles Francis Adams (son of former president John Quincy Adams) calmed the British by arguing that Wilkes had acted without orders. They ordered the release of the prisoners and apologized to the British, handling the incident so adroitly that the public outcry was largely forgotten when Mason and Slidell arrived in London.

### The Union's First Attack

Like most southerners, northerners were confident that military action would bring the war to a quick end. General Irvin McDowell made the first move when his troops crossed into Virginia to engage troops led by General P. G. T. Beauregard.

McDowell's troops, though high-spirited, were poorly trained and undisciplined. They ambled along as if they were on a country outing, allowing Beauregard enough time to position his troops in defense of a vital rail center near Manassas Junction along a creek called **Bull Run**.

McDowell attacked on Sunday, July 21, and maintained the offensive most of the day. He seemed poised to overrun the Confederates until southern reinforcements under **Thomas J. Jackson** stalled the Union advance. Jackson's unflinching stand at Bull Run earned him the nickname "Stonewall," and under intense cannon fire, Union troops panicked and began fleeing into a throng of northern spectators who had brought picnic lunches and settled in to watch the battle. Thoroughly humiliated before a hometown crowd, Union soldiers retreated toward Washington. Jefferson Davis immediately ordered the invasion of the Union capital, but the Confederates were also in disarray and made no attempt to pursue the fleeing Union forces.

This battle profoundly affected both sides. In the South, the victory stirred confidence that the war would be short and victory complete. Northerners, disillusioned and

**belligerent status** Recognition that a participant in a conflict is a nation engaged in warfare rather than a rebel against a legally constituted government; full diplomatic recognition is one possible outcome.

**Bull Run** A creek in Virginia not far from Washington, D.C., where Confederate soldiers forced federal troops to retreat in the first major battle of the Civil War, fought in July 1861.

**Thomas J. Jackson** Confederate general nicknamed "Stonewall"; he commanded troops at both battles of Bull Run and was mortally wounded by his own soldiers at Chancellorsville in 1863.

**George B. McClellan** U.S. general tapped by Lincoln to organize the Army of the Potomac; he was a skillful organizer but slow and indecisive as a field commander.

**Army of the Potomac** Army created to guard the U.S. capital after the Battle of Bull Run in 1861; it became the main Union army in the East.

embarrassed, pledged that no similar retreats would occur. Under fire for the loss and hoping to improve both the management of military affairs and the competence of the troops, Lincoln fired McDowell and appointed **George B. McClellan**. McClellan was assigned to create the **Army of the Potomac** to defend the capital from Confederate attack and spearhead any offensives into Virginia. Lincoln also replaced Secretary of War Simon Cameron with Edwin Stanton, a politician and lawyer from Pennsylvania.

General McClellan's strengths were in organization and discipline, and both were sorely needed. Before Bull Run, Union officers had lounged around Washington while largely unsupervised raw recruits in army camps received no military instruction. Under McClellan, months of training turned the 185,000-man army into a well-drilled and efficient unit. Calls to attack Richmond began anew, but McClellan, in no hurry for battle, continued to drill the troops and remained in the capital. Finally on January 27, 1862, Lincoln called for a broad offensive, but his general in chief ignored the order and delayed for nearly two months. Completely frustrated, Lincoln removed McClellan as general in chief on March 11 but left him in command of the Army of the Potomac. Even so, Union forces in the East mounted no major offensives.

## From Bull Run to Antietam

- ★ **How did military action during the opening years of the war affect people's perceptions of the war in the North and South?**
- ★ **Why did Lincoln issue the Emancipation Proclamation when and in the way he did? What sorts of responses did it elicit?**

Reorganizing the military and forming the Army of the Potomac did not accomplish Lincoln's and the nation's goal of toppling the Confederacy quickly and bringing the rebellious South back into the Union. In the second year of the war, Confederate forces continued to outwit and outfight numerically superior and better-equipped federal troops. After Bull Run it was clear that the war would be neither short nor glorious. Military, political, and diplomatic strategies became increasingly entangled as both North and South struggled for the major victories that would end the war.

### Struggle for the Mississippi

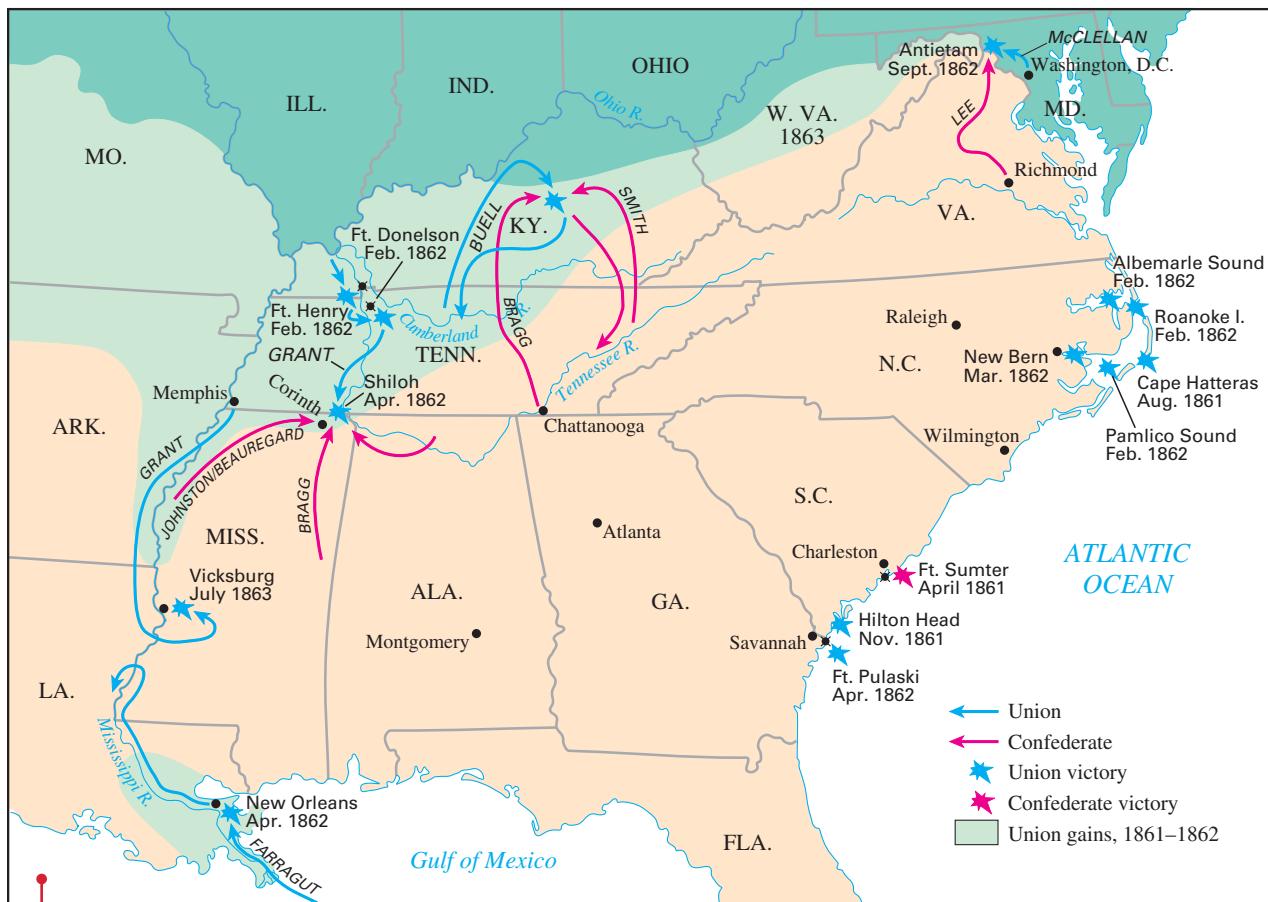
**Ulysses S. Grant** U.S. general who became general in chief of the Union army in 1864 after the Vicksburg campaign; he later became president of the United States.

**William Tecumseh Sherman** U.S. general who captured Atlanta in 1864 and led a destructive march to the Atlantic coast.

**Battle of Shiloh** Battle in Tennessee in April 1862 that ended with an unpursued Confederate withdrawal; both sides suffered heavy casualties for the first time, but neither side gained ground.

While McClellan stalled in the East, one Union general finally had some success in the western theater of the war. Following the strategy outlined in General Scott's anaconda plan, **Ulysses S. Grant** moved against southern strongholds in the Mississippi Valley in 1862. On February 6, he took Fort Henry along the Tennessee River and ten days later captured Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River near Nashville, Tennessee (see Map 14.1). As Union forces approached Nashville, the Confederates retreated to Corinth, Mississippi. In this one swift stroke, Grant successfully penetrated Confederate western defenses and brought Kentucky and most of Tennessee under federal control.

At Corinth, Confederate general Albert Sidney Johnston finally reorganized the retreating southern troops while Grant was waiting for reinforcements. Early on April 6, to Grant's surprise, Johnston attacked at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, near a small country meetinghouse called Shiloh Church. Some Union forces under General **William Tecumseh Sherman** were driven back, but the Confederate attack soon lost momentum as Union defenses stiffened. The **Battle of Shiloh** raged until midafternoon. When Johnston was mortally wounded, General Beauregard took



**MAP 14.1** The Anaconda Plan and the Battle of Antietam

This map illustrates the anaconda plan at work. The Union navy closed southern harbors while Grant's troops worked to seal the northern end of the Mississippi River. The map also shows the Battle of Antietam (September 1862), in which Confederate troops under Robert E. Lee were finally defeated by the Union army under General George McClellan.

command and by day's end believed the enemy was defeated. But Union reinforcements arrived during the night, and the next morning Grant counterattacked, pushing the Confederates back to Corinth. The staggering losses on both sides at Shiloh began to awaken soldiers and civilians alike to the potential for carnage the war would fulfill.

Farther south, Admiral David G. Farragut led a fleet of U.S. Navy gunboats against New Orleans, the commercial and banking center of the South, and on April 25 forced the city's surrender. Farragut then sailed up the Mississippi, hoping to take the well-fortified city of **Vicksburg**, Mississippi. He scored several victories until he reached Port Hudson, Louisiana, where the combination of Confederate defenses and shallow water forced him to halt. Meanwhile, on June 6, Union gunboats destroyed a Confederate fleet at Memphis, Tennessee, and brought the upper Mississippi under Union control. Vicksburg remained the only major obstacle to Union control over the entire river (see Map 14.1).

Realizing the seriousness of the situation in the West, the Confederates regrouped and invaded Kentucky. Union forces under General William S. Rosecrans stopped Confederate general Braxton Bragg's force on December 31 at Stone's River and did not pursue when the Confederates retreated. Back in Mississippi, Grant launched two unsuccessful

**Vicksburg** Confederate-held city on the Mississippi River that surrendered on July 4, 1863, after a lengthy siege by Grant's forces.

attacks against Vicksburg in December, but then Union efforts stalled. Nevertheless, northern forces had wrenched control of the upper and lower ends of the river away from the Confederacy.

### Lee's Aggressive Defense of Virginia

The anaconda plan was well on its way to cutting the Confederacy in two, but the general public in the North thought that the path to real victory led to Richmond, capital of the Confederacy. Thus, to maintain public support for the war,

Lincoln needed victories over the Confederates in the East, and campaigns there were given higher priority than campaigns in the West. Confederate leaders, realizing that Richmond would be an important prize for the North, took dramatic steps to keep their capital city out of enemy hands. In fact, defending Richmond was the South's primary goal: more supplies and men were assigned to campaigns in Virginia than to defending Confederate borders elsewhere.

Expecting to surprise the Confederates by attacking Richmond from the south, McClellan transported the entire Army of the Potomac by ship to Fort Monroe, Virginia. Initiating what would be called the **Peninsular Campaign**, the army marched up the peninsula between the York and James Rivers. In typical fashion, McClellan proceeded cautiously. The outnumbered Confederate forces took advantage of his indecision and twice slipped away, retreating toward Richmond while McClellan followed. Hoping to overcome the odds by surprising his opponent, General Joseph E. Johnston, commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, wheeled about and attacked at Seven Pines on May 31. Though the battle was indecisive—both sides claimed victory—it halted McClellan's progress and disabled Johnston, who was seriously wounded.

With McClellan stalled, Confederate stalwart Stonewall Jackson staged a brilliant diversionary thrust down the Shenandoah Valley toward Washington. Jackson, who had grown up in the region, seemed to be everywhere at once. In thirty days, he and his men (who became known as the “foot cavalry”) marched 350 miles, defeated three Union armies in five battles, captured and sent back to Richmond a fortune in provisions and equipment, inflicted twice as many casualties as they received, and confused and immobilized Union forces in the region.

Meanwhile, Union forces were marking time near Richmond while McClellan waited for reinforcements. Determined to remove this threat, Confederate forces launched a series of attacks to drive McClellan away from the Confederate capital. Although his army had already proved itself against the Confederates at Seven Pines, a new factor weighed in against McClellan. With Johnston wounded, Davis had been forced to replace him, choosing Robert E. Lee. Lee was probably the Confederacy's best general. Daring, bold, and tactically aggressive, he enjoyed combat, pushed his troops to the maximum, and was well liked by those serving under him. Lee had an uncanny ability to read the character of his opponents, predict their maneuvers, and exploit their mistakes. In a move that became typical of his generalship, Lee split his forces and attacked from all sides over a seven-day period in August, forcing McClellan into a defensive position. The Peninsular Campaign was over. The self-promoting Union general had been beaten in part by his own indecisiveness.

Fed up with McClellan, Lincoln transferred command of the Army of the Potomac to General John Pope, but Pope's command was brief. Union forces encountered Lee's army again at the Manassas rail line on August 30. The Confederates pretended to retreat, and when Pope followed, Lee soundly defeated Lincoln's new general in the **Second Battle of Bull Run**. Thoroughly disappointed with Pope's performance, but lacking any other viable replacement, Lincoln once again named McClellan commander of the Army of the Potomac.

**Peninsular Campaign** McClellan's attempt in the spring and summer of 1862 to capture Richmond by advancing up the peninsula between the James and York Rivers; Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee drove his troops back.

**Second Battle of Bull Run** Union defeat near Bull Run in August 1862; Union troops led by John Pope were outmaneuvered by Lee.

### Lee's Invasion of Maryland

Feeling confident after the second victory at Bull Run, Lee devised a bold offensive against Maryland. His plan had three objectives. First, he wanted to move the fighting out of war-torn Virginia so that farmers could harvest food. Second, he

hoped that he might attract volunteers from among the many slaveowners in Maryland to beef up his undermanned army. Third, he believed that a strong thrust against Union forces might gain diplomatic recognition for the Confederacy from Europe. In the process, he hoped to win enough territory to force the Union to sue for peace. On September 4, Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland, formulating an intricate offensive by dividing his army into three separate attack wings. But someone was careless—Union soldiers found a copy of Lee's detailed instructions wrapped around some cigars at an abandoned Confederate campsite.

If McClellan had acted swiftly on this intelligence, he could have crushed Lee's army piece by piece, but he waited sixteen hours before advancing. By then, Lee had learned of the missing orders and quickly withdrew. Lee reunited some of his forces at Sharpsburg, Maryland, around **Antietam Creek** (see Map 14.1). There, on September 17, the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia engaged in the bloodiest single-day battle of the Civil War.

The casualties in this one battle were more than double those suffered in the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico combined. "The air was full of the hiss of bullets and the hurtle of grapeshot," one Union soldier said, and "the whole landscape turned red." The bitter fighting exhausted both armies. After a day of rest, Lee retreated across the Potomac. Stonewall Jackson, covering Lee's retreat, soundly thrashed a force that McClellan sent in pursuit. But for the first time, General Lee experienced defeat.

Although Lee's offensive had been thwarted, Lincoln was in no way pleased with the performance of his army and its leadership. He believed that McClellan could have destroyed Lee's forces had he attacked earlier or, failing that, had pursued the fleeing Confederate army with all haste. He fired McClellan again, this time for good, and placed Ambrose E. Burnside in command of the Army of the Potomac.

Burnside moved the Army of the Potomac to the east bank of the Rappahannock River overlooking **Fredericksburg**, Virginia (see Map 14.2), where he delayed for almost three weeks. Lee used the time to fortify the heights west of the city with men and artillery. On December 13, in one of the worst mistakes of the war, Burnside ordered a day-long frontal assault. The results were devastating. Federal troops, mowed down from the heights, suffered tremendous casualties, and once again the Army of the Potomac retreated to Washington.

### Diplomacy and the Politics of Emancipation

The first full year of the war ended with mixed results for both sides. Union forces in the West had scored major victories. But the failure of the Army of the Potomac under three different generals and against Lee and Jackson's brilliant maneuvers seemed to outweigh those successes. Lee's victories, however, carried heavy casualties, and the South's ability to supply and deploy troops was rapidly diminishing. A long, drawn-out conflict favored the Union unless Davis could secure help for the Confederacy from abroad.

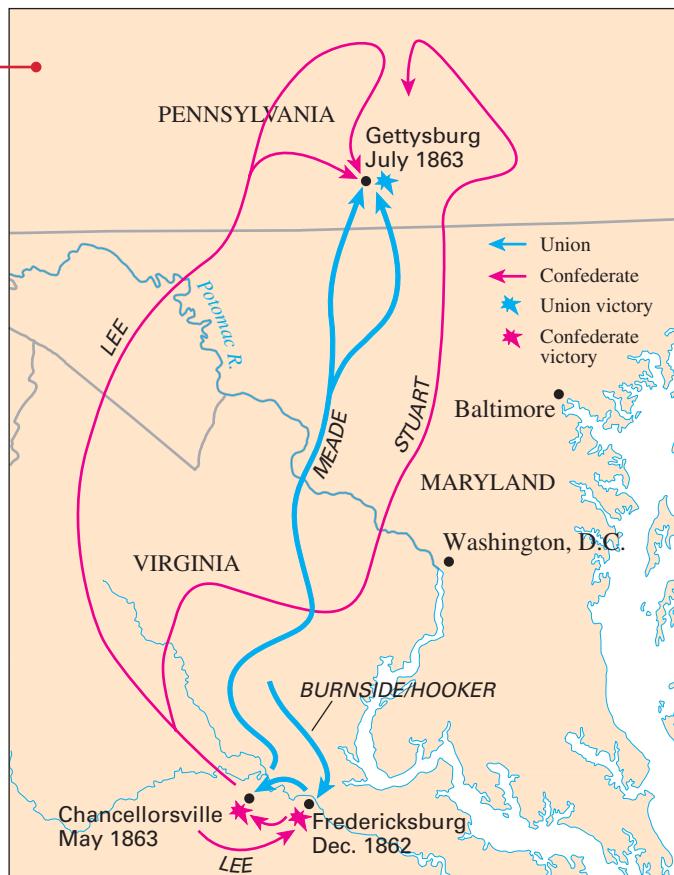
The Confederacy still expected British aid, but nothing seemed to shake Britain's commitment to neutrality. In addition to the practical and ethical issues discussed earlier, this resistance was due to the efforts of Charles Francis Adams, Lincoln's ambassador in London, who demonstrated his diplomatic skill repeatedly during the war. Also,

**Antietam Creek** Site of a battle that occurred in September 1862 when Lee's forces invaded Maryland; both sides suffered heavy losses, and Lee retreated into Virginia.

**Fredericksburg** Site in Virginia of a Union defeat in December 1862 that demonstrated the incompetence of the new Union commander, Ambrose E. Burnside.

**MAP 14.2** Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg

This map shows the campaigns that took place during the winter of 1862 and spring of 1863, culminating in the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1863). General Meade's victory at Gettysburg may have been the critical turning point of the war.



Britain possessed a surplus of cotton and did not need southern supplies, neutralizing the South's only economic lever and frustrating Davis's diplomatic goals.

Yet Radical Republicans were also frustrated. No aspect of the war was going as they had expected. They had hoped that the Union army would defeat the South in short order. Instead, the war effort was dragging on. More important from the Radicals' point of view, nothing was being done about slavery. They pressed Lincoln to take a stand against slavery, and they pushed Congress for legislation to prohibit slavery in federal territories.

Politically astute as always, Lincoln acted to appease the Radical Republicans, foster popular support in the North for the war effort, and increase favorable sentiment for the Union cause abroad. During the summer of 1862, he drafted a proclamation freeing the slaves in the Confederacy and submitted it to his cabinet. Cabinet members advised that he postpone announcing the policy until after the Union had achieved a military victory. Five days after the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln unveiled the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which abolished slavery in the states “in rebellion” and would go into effect on January 1, 1863.

Although the Emancipation Proclamation was a major step toward ending slavery, it would free no slaves until military lines moved. The proclamation applied only to slavery in areas controlled by the Confederacy, not in any area controlled by the Union. The president could not afford to alienate the four slave states that had remained in the Union,

#### Emancipation Proclamation

Lincoln's order abolishing slavery as of January 1, 1863, in states “in rebellion” but not in border territories still loyal to the Union

# Investigating America

## Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, 1862

On September 22, 1862, in the wake of the battle of Antietam, Lincoln issued an executive order promising freedom to enslaved Americans living in the Confederate states. Under this order, Confederate states could surrender before January 1 and retain their slaves. When they did not, Lincoln issued a second executive order naming the regions where liberation was to take place. The following is from the proclamation of September 22.

.....

I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that hereafter, as heretofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relation between the United States, and each of the states, and the people thereof, in which states that relation is, or may be suspended or disturbed.

That it is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure tendering pecuniary aid to the free acceptance or rejection of all slave-states, so called, the people whereof may not then be in rebellion against the United States, and which states may then have voluntarily adopted, or thereafter may voluntarily adopt, immediate, or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits; and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent upon this continent, or elsewhere, will be continued.

That on the first day of January [1863], all persons held as slaves within any state, or designated part of a state, the people whereof thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States will, during the continuance in office of the present incumbents, recognize such persons, as being free, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom. ....

That attention is hereby called to an Act of Congress entitled "An Act to make an additional Article of War" Approved March 13, 1862, and....Also to the ninth and tenth

sections of an act entitled "An Act to suppress Insurrection, to punish Treason and Rebellion, to seize and confiscate property of rebels, and for other purposes," approved July 17, 1862, and which sections are: "SEC. 9. And be it further enacted, that all slaves of persons who shall hereafter be engaged in rebellion against the government of the United States, or who shall in any way give aid or comfort thereto, escaping from such persons and taking refuge within the lines of the army; and all slaves captured from such persons or deserted by them and coming under the control of the government of the United States; and all slaves of such persons found [or] being within any place occupied by rebel forces and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free of their servitude, and not again held as slaves. ...."

And I do hereby enjoin upon and order all persons engaged in the military and naval service of the United States to observe, obey, and enforce, within their respective spheres of service, the act and sections above recited.

And the executive will [in due time] [at the next session of congress] recommend that all citizens of the United States who shall have remained loyal thereto throughout the rebellion, shall (upon the restoration of the constitutional relation between the United States, and their respective states, and people, if that relation shall have been suspended or disturbed) be compensated for all losses by acts of the United States, including the loss of slaves.

.....

- Critics at the time charged that Lincoln freed the slaves where he had no authority—in the rebellious Confederate states—but did not do so where he could, in his own country. By what authority did Lincoln claim this power, and could he legally have wielded it in Maryland or Delaware?
- Why do you think the president gave the Confederate states until January 1 to comply? And why did he specifically mention the two 1862 laws of Congress, generally known as the Confiscation Acts?



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although he submitted a plan for compensated emancipation in those areas (which they chose not to accept). Lincoln made emancipation entirely conditional on a Union military victory, a gambit designed to force critics of the war, whether in the United States or Great Britain, to rally behind his cause.

Whether or not it was successful as a humanitarian action, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation at the time he did and in the form he did was a profoundly successful political step for Lincoln. Although a handful of northern Democrats and a few Union military leaders called it an “absurd proclamation of a political coward,” more joined Frederick Douglass in proclaiming, “We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree.” Meanwhile, some in Britain pointed to the paradox of the proclamation: it declared an end to slavery in areas where Lincoln could not enforce it, while having no effect on slavery in areas within the United States, where the president lacked the constitutional power to abolish it. But even there, most applauded the document and rallied against recognition of the Confederacy.

## The Human Dimensions of the War

★ **How did the burdens of war affect society in the North and the South during the course of the fighting?**

★ **How did individuals and governments in both regions respond to those burdens?**

The Civil War imposed tremendous stress on American society. As the men marched off to battle, women faced the task of caring for families and property alone. As casualties increased, the number of voluntary enlistments decreased, and both sides searched for ways to find replacements for dead and wounded soldiers. The armies consumed vast amounts of manufactured and agricultural products—constantly demanding not only weapons and ammunition but also food, clothing, and hardware. Government spending was enormous, hard currency was scarce, and inflation soared as both governments printed paper money to pay their debts. Industrial capability, transportation facilities, and agricultural production often dictated when, where, and how well armies fought. Society in both North and South changed to meet an array of hardships as individuals facing unfamiliar conditions attempted to carry on their lives amid the war’s devastation.

### Instituting the Draft

By the end of 1862, heavy casualties, massive desertion, and declining enlistments had depleted both armies. Burdened with a smaller population and growing disaffection on the part of nonslaveholding farmers, the Confederacy was forced

to institute the first ever draft in the Western Hemisphere. Conscription in the South, however, met with considerable resentment and resistance. Believing that plantations were necessary to the war effort and that slaves would not work unless directly overseen by masters, in 1862 Confederate officials passed the **Twenty Negro Law**, which exempted planters owning twenty or more slaves from military service. This policy fostered the feeling that the poor were going off to fight while the rich stayed safely at home. The law was modified in 1863, requiring exempted planters to pay \$500, and in 1864, the number of slaves required to earn an exemption was lowered to fifteen. Nevertheless, resentment continued to smolder.

Although the North had a much larger population pool than the South to draw from, its enlistments sagged with its military fortunes during 1862. More than a hundred thousand Union soldiers were absent without official leave. Most volunteers had enlisted

**Twenty Negro Law** Confederate law that exempted planters owning twenty or more slaves from the draft on the grounds that overseeing farm labor done by slaves was necessary to the war effort.

in 1861 for limited terms. Calling on state militias netted few replacements because the Democrats, who made tremendous political gains at the state level in 1862, openly criticized Republican policies and at times refused to cooperate. In March 1863, Congress passed the **Conscription Act**, trying to bypass state officials and ensure enough manpower to continue the war. The law in effect made all single men between the ages of 20 and 45 and married men between 20 and 35 eligible for service. Government agents collected names in a house-to-house survey, and draftees were selected by lottery.

The conscription law did offer “escape routes.” Drafted men could avoid military service by hiring an “acceptable substitute” or by paying a \$300 fee to purchase exemption. The burden of service thus fell on farmers and urban workers—a large proportion of whom were immigrants—who were already suffering from the economic burden of high taxation and inflation caused by the war. Workers also feared that multitudes of former slaves freed by the Emancipation Proclamation would pour into the already crowded job market, further lowering the value of their labor. Together, conscription and emancipation created among the urban poor a sense of alienation, which exploded in the summer of 1863.

The trouble started on July 13 in New York City. Armed demonstrators protesting unfair draft laws engaged in a spree of violence, venting their frustration over the troubles plaguing working people. During three nights of rioting, white workingmen beat many African Americans and lynched six. The Colored Orphan Asylum and several homes owned by blacks were burned. Mobs ransacked businesses owned by African Americans and by people who employed them. Irish men and women and members of other groups that seemed to threaten whites’ job security also felt the fury as mobs attacked their churches, businesses, and homes. The homes of prominent Republicans and

**Conscription Act** Law passed by Congress in 1863 that established a draft but allowed wealthy people to escape it by hiring a substitute or paying the government a \$300 fee.



Many soldiers entered the Civil War expecting excitement and colorful pageantry, but the realities of war were harsh and ugly. And the new art of photography, introduced to the United States shortly before the war, brought the harsh reality home to Americans on both sides in the fighting. Scenes like this one became so common that veterans reported becoming numb to the shock of death and the meaning of death itself changed in the minds of many Americans. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. [LC-USZ62-104044].

abolitionists were vandalized. Protesting draft exemptions for the rich, rioters also set upon well-dressed strangers on the streets. After four days of chaos, federal troops put down the riot. Fearful of future violence, the city council of New York City voted to pay the \$300 exemption fee for all poor draftees who chose not to serve in the army.

### Wartime Economy in the North and South

In his 1864 message to Congress, Lincoln stated that the war had not depleted northern resources. Although the president exaggerated a bit, the statement contained some truth. Northern industry and population did grow during the Civil War.

Operating in cooperation with government, manufacturing experienced a boom. Manufacturers of war supplies benefited from government contracts. Textiles and shoemaking boomed as new labor-saving devices improved efficiency and increased production. Congress stimulated economic growth by means of subsidies and land grants to support a transcontinental railroad, higher tariffs to aid manufacturing, and land grants that states could use to finance higher education. In 1862 Congress passed the **Homestead Act** to make land available to more farmers. The law granted 160 acres of the public domain in the West to any citizen or would-be citizen who lived on, and improved, the land for five years.

Of course the economic picture was not entirely positive. The Union found itself resorting to financial tricks to keep the economy afloat. Facing a cash-flow emergency in 1862, Congress passed the Legal Tender Act, authorizing Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase to issue \$431 million in paper money, known as **greenbacks**, that was backed not by specie but only by the government's commitment to redeem the bills. Financial support also came through selling bonds. More than \$2 billion worth of government bonds were sold, and most of them were paid for in greenbacks. These emergency measures helped the Union survive the financial pressures created by the war, but the combination of bond issues and paper money not backed by gold or silver set up a highly unstable situation that came back to haunt Republicans after the war.

The South, an agrarian society, began the war without an industrial base. In addition to lacking transportation, raw materials, and machines, the South lacked managers and skilled industrial workers. The Confederate government intervened more directly in the economy than did its Union counterpart, offering generous loans to new or existing companies that would produce war materials and agree to sell at least two-thirds of their production to the government. Josiah Gorgas started government-owned production plants in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. These innovative programs, however, could not compensate for inadequate prewar industrialization.

Southern industrial shortcomings severely handicapped the army. During Lee's Maryland campaign, many Confederate soldiers were barefoot because shoes were in such short supply. Ordnance was always in demand. Northern plants could produce more than five thousand muskets a day; Confederate production never exceeded three hundred. The most serious shortage, however, was food. Although the South was an agricultural region, most of its productive acreage was devoted to cotton, tobacco, and other crops that were essential to its overall economy but not suitable to eat. Corn and rice were the primary food products, but supplies were continually reduced by military campaigns and Union occupation of farmlands. Hog production suffered from the same disruptions as rice and corn growing, and although Southern cattle were abundant, most were range stock grown for hides and tallow rather than for food. Hunger became a miserable part of daily life for the Confederate armies.

Civilians in the South suffered from the same shortages as the army. Because of prewar shipping patterns, the few rail lines that crossed the Confederacy ran north and

**Homestead Act** Law passed by Congress in 1862 that promised ownership of 160 acres of public land to any citizen or would-be citizen who lived on and cultivated the land for five years.

**greenbacks** Paper money issued by the Union; it was not backed by gold.

south. Distribution of goods became almost impossible as invading Union forces cut rail lines and disrupted production. The flow of cattle, horses, and food from the West diminished when Union forces gained control of the Mississippi. Imported goods had to evade the Union naval blockade. Southern society, cut off from the outside world, consumed its existing resources and found no way to obtain more.

### Women in Two Nations at War

Because the South had fewer men than the North to send to war, a larger proportion of southern families were left in the care of women. Some women worked farms, herded livestock, and supported their families. Others found themselves homeless, living in complete poverty, as the ravages of war destroyed the countryside. Working-class wives often tried to persuade their husbands to desert, to come home to family and safety. One woman shouted to her husband, who was being drafted for the second time, “Desert again, Jake.” The vast majority, however, supported the war effort despite the hardships at home and at the front.

Women became responsible for much of the South’s agricultural and industrial production, overseeing the raising of crops, working in factories, managing estates, and running businesses. As one southern soldier wrote, women bore “the greatest burden of this horrid war.” Indeed, the burden of a woman was great—working the fields, running the



Women served in many different capacities during the Civil War. A very small number of them actually dressed as men to join the fighting. Frances Clayton was one of the few documented cases of such Civil War gender-bending. Boston Public Library/Rare Books Department—Courtesy of the Trustees.

# Investigating America

## Susie King Taylor, 1899

Like all African Americans, Susie King Taylor had a deep personal investment in the outcome of the American Civil War. Unlike most "contrabands" who joined the Union cause, Taylor recorded her experiences during the war, giving her contemporaries and modern historians a unique insight into the accomplishments and disillusionments that came with fighting for the freedom and equality that the war seemed to promise. Years after the war, in 1886, Taylor was one of the co-founders of the Women's Relief Corp, an organization devoted to aiding Civil War veterans and furthering recognition for American soldiers. She was the president of the Massachusetts auxiliary in 1898, leading the organization to send aid to soldiers in the Spanish-American War (covered in Chapter 19). At the end of the Spanish-American War, Taylor reflected on the impact of American racial prejudice on Cubans and the ongoing denial of justice to African Americans.

With the close of the Spanish war, and on the entrance of the Americans into Cuba, the same conditions confront us as the war of 1861 left. The Cubans are free, but it is a limited freedom, for prejudice, deep-rooted, has been brought to them and a separation made between the white and black Cubans, a thing that had never existed between

them before; but today there is the same intense hatred toward the negro in Cuba that there is in some parts of this country.

I helped to furnish and pack boxes to be sent to the soldiers and hospitals during the first part of the Spanish war; there were black soldiers there too. At the battle of San Juan Hill, they were in the front, just as brave, loyal, and true as those other black men who fought for freedom and the right; and yet their bravery and faithfulness were reluctantly acknowledged, and praise grudgingly given. All we ask for is "equal justice," the same that is accorded to all other races who come to this country, of their free will (not forced to, as we were), and are allowed to enjoy every privilege, unrestricted, while we are denied what is rightfully our own in a country which the labor of our forefathers helped to make what it is.

.....

- In Taylor's mind, what conditions did the end of the Spanish-American War leave unresolved? What does this say about her perceptions concerning her role in the Civil War?
- What was she suggesting about the way in which the contributions of African American Civil War veterans were regarded? What does this suggest about her motivations for writing about her experiences in that war?



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household, and waiting for news from loved ones at the front or for the dreaded message that she was now a widow or had lost a child.

Women in the North served in much the same capacity as their southern counterparts. They maintained families and homes alone, working to provide income and raise children. Although they did not face the shortages and ravages of battle that made life so hard for southern women, they did work in factories, run family businesses, teach school, and supply soldiers. Many served in managerial capacities or as writers and civil servants. Even before the war ended, northern women were going south to educate former slaves and help them find a place in American society. Women assumed new roles that helped prepare them to become more involved in social and political life after the war.

Women from both the South and the North actively participated in the war itself. Many women on both sides served as scouts, couriers, and spies, and more than four hundred disguised themselves as men and served as active soldiers until they were discovered. General William S. Rosecrans expressed dismay when one of his sergeants was delivered of "a bouncing baby boy."

### Free Blacks, Slaves, and War

The changes the Civil War brought for African Americans, both free and slave, were radical and not always for the better. At first, many free blacks attempted to enlist in the Union army but were turned away. In 1861 General Benjamin F. Butler began using runaway slaves, called contrabands, as laborers. Several other northern commanders quickly adopted the practice. As the number of contrabands increased, however, the Union grappled with problems of housing and feeding them.

In the summer of 1862, Congress authorized the acceptance of "persons of African descent" into the armed forces, but enlistment remained low. After the Emancipation Proclamation, Union officials actively recruited former slaves, raising troops from among the freedmen and forming them into regiments known as the U.S. Colored Troops. Some northern state governments sought free blacks to fill state draft quotas; agents offered generous bonuses to those who signed up. By the end of the war, about 180,000 African Americans had enlisted in northern armies.

Army officials discriminated against African American soldiers in a variety of ways. Units were segregated, and until 1864, blacks were paid less than whites. All black regiments had white commanders; the government refused to allow blacks to lead blacks. Only one hundred were commissioned as officers, and no African American soldier ever received a commission higher than major.

As the war progressed, the number of African Americans in the Union army increased dramatically. By 1865, almost two-thirds of Union troops in the Mississippi Valley were black. Some southerners violently resented the Union's use of these troops, and African American soldiers suffered atrocities because some Confederate leaders refused to take black prisoners. At Fort Pillow, Tennessee, for example, Confederate soldiers massacred more than a hundred African American soldiers who were trying to surrender.



Eager to fill constantly depleting army ranks, Union officials appealed to African Americans to volunteer for military service. This recruiting poster, which bore the legend "Come Join Us, Brothers," presents a highly glorified vision of what conditions were like for black units. One accurate detail is that the only officer in the scene is white; in fact, hardly any African Americans were permitted to command troops during the Civil War. Chicago Historical Society.

**54th Massachusetts** Regiment of African American troops from Massachusetts commanded by abolitionist Colonel Robert Gould Shaw; it led an assault on Fort Wagner at Charleston Harbor.

About sixty-eight thousand black Union soldiers were killed or wounded in battle, and only twenty-one were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Probably no unit acquitted itself better in the field than the **54th Massachusetts**. On July 18, 1863, it led a frontal assault on Confederate defenses at Charleston Harbor. Despite sustaining grievous casualties, the African American troops captured the fort's front wall and held it for nearly an hour before being forced to retreat. Their conduct in battle had a large impact on changing attitudes toward black soldiers and emancipation.

### Life and Death at the Front

Many volunteers on both sides in the Civil War had romantic notions about military service. Most were disappointed. Life as a common soldier was anything but glorious. Letters and diaries written by soldiers most frequently tell of long periods of boredom in overcrowded camps punctuated by furious spells of dangerous action.

Though life in camp was tedious, it could be nearly as dangerous as time spent on the battlefield. Problems with supplying safe drinking water and disposing of waste constantly plagued military leaders faced with providing basic services for large numbers of people, often on short notice. Diseases such as dysentery and **typhoid fever** frequently swept through unsanitary camps. And in the overcrowded conditions that often prevailed, smallpox and other contagious diseases passed rapidly from person to person. At times, as many as a quarter of the uninjured people in camps were disabled by one or another of these ailments.

Lacking in resources, organization, and expertise, the South did little to upgrade camp conditions. In the North, however, women drew on the organizational skills they had gained as antebellum reformers and created voluntary organizations to address the problem. At the local level, women like Mary Livermore created small relief societies designed to aid soldiers and their families. Gradually these merged into regional organizations that would take the lead in raising money and implementing large-scale public health efforts, both in the army camps and at home. Mental health advocate and reformer Dorothea Dix was also one of these crusaders. In June 1861, President Lincoln responded to their concerns by creating the **United States Sanitary Commission**, a government agency responsible for advising the military on public health issues and investigating sanitary problems. Gradually enfolding many of the local and regional societies into its structure, “The Sanitary,” as it was called, put hundreds of nurses into the field, providing much-needed relief for overburdened military doctors. Even with this official organization in place, many women continued to labor as volunteer nurses in the camps and in hospitals behind the lines.

Nurses on both sides showed bravery and devotion. Often working under fire at the front and with almost no medical supplies, these volunteers nursed sick and wounded soldiers, watched as they died not only from their wounds but also from infection and disease, and offered as much comfort and help as they could. **Clara Barton**, a famous northern nurse known as the “Angel of the Battlefield,” recalled “speaking to and feeding with my own hands each soldier” as she attempted to nurse them back to health. Hospitals were unsanitary, overflowing, and underfunded.

The numbers of wounded who filled the hospital tents was unprecedented, largely because of technological innovations that had taken place during the antebellum period. New **rifled** muskets had many times the range of the old smooth-bore weapons used during earlier wars—the effective range of the Springfield rifle used by many Union soldiers was 400 yards, and a stray bullet could still kill a man at 1,000 yards. Waterproof cartridges, perfected by gunsmith Samuel Colt, made these weapons much less prone to

**typhoid fever** An infectious disease transmitted through contact with contaminated water, milk, or food; causes severe intestinal distress and high fever.

### United States Sanitary Commission

Government commission established by Abraham Lincoln to improve public health conditions in military camps and hospitals.

**Clara Barton** Organizer of a volunteer service to aid sick and wounded Civil War soldiers; she later founded the American branch of the Red Cross.

**rifled** Having a series of spiral grooves inside the barrel of a gun that cause the projectile to spin, giving it greater range and accuracy.

misfire and much easier to reload. Rifled artillery also added to the casualty count, as did exploding artillery shells, which sent deadly shrapnel ripping through lines of men.

Many surgeons at the front lines could do little more than amputate limbs to save lives. Hospitals, understaffed and lacking supplies and medicines, frequently became breeding grounds for disease. The war exacted a tremendous emotional toll on everyone, even on those who escaped physical injury. As one veteran put it, soldiers had seen “so many new forms of death” and “so many frightful and novel kinds of mutilation.”

Conditions were even worse in prison camps. Throughout much of the war, an agreement provided for prisoner exchanges, but that did not prevent overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. At the most notorious of the Civil War prison camps, **Andersonville**, in northern Georgia, thousands of Union captives languished in an open stockade with only a small creek for water and virtually no sanitary facilities. And as the war dragged on, the exchange system stopped working effectively, in part because moving and accounting for the large numbers of prisoners presented a serious organizational problem. Another contributing factor, though, was the refusal by Confederate officials to exchange African American prisoners of war—those who were not slaughtered like the men at Fort Pillow were enslaved. Also, late in the war, Union commanders suspended all prisoner exchanges in hopes of depriving the South of much-needed replacement soldiers.

Even death itself came to be redefined, as 8 percent of the white male population in the United States between the ages of 13 and 43 died in such a short time and in such grisly ways. People at the front reported being numbed by the horror. One army surgeon reported, “I pass over the putrefying bodies of the dead . . . and feel as . . . unconcerned as though they were two hundred pigs.” Nor was distance any insulation from the horrors of death—the new art of photography brought graphic images of the gruesome carnage directly into the nation’s parlors. “Death does not seem half so terrible as it did long ago,” one Texas woman reported. “We have grown used to it.”

## Waging Total War

★ **What factors contributed to the Union’s adoption of a total war strategy after 1863?**

★ **Was total war a justifiable option in light of the human and property damage it inflicted and the overall consequences it achieved? Why or why not?**

As northerners anticipated the presidential election of 1864, Lincoln faced severe challenges on several fronts. The losses to Lee and Jackson in Virginia and the failure to catch Lee at Antietam had eroded public support. Many northerners resented the war, conscription, and abolitionism. Others feared Lincoln’s powerful central government.

Northern Democrats advocated a peace platform and turned to George B. McClellan, Lincoln’s ousted general, as a potential presidential candidate. Lincoln also faced a challenge from within his own party. Radical Republicans, who regarded him as too soft on the South and unfit to run the war, began planning a campaign to win power. They championed the candidacy of John C. Frémont, who had become an ardent advocate of the complete abolition of slavery.

### Lincoln’s Generals and Southern Successes

The surest way for Lincoln to stop his political opponents was through military success. Lincoln had replaced McClellan with Burnside, but the results had been disastrous. Lincoln tried again, demoting Burnside and elevating General Joseph

**Chancellorsville** Site in Virginia where, in May 1863, Confederate troops led by Lee defeated a much larger Union force.

Hooker. Despite Hooker's reputation for bravery in battle—his nickname was “Fighting Joe”—Lee soundly defeated his forces at **Chancellorsville** in May 1863 (see Map 14.2). After Hooker had maneuvered Lee into a corner, Stonewall Jackson unleashed a vicious attack, and Fighting Joe simply “lost his nerve,” according to one of his subordinates. Hooker resigned, and Lincoln replaced him with General George E. Meade.

Chancellorsville was a devastating loss for the North, but it was perhaps more devastating for the Confederates. They lost Stonewall Jackson. After he led the charge that unnerved Hooker, Jackson's own men mistakenly shot him as he rode back toward his camp in the darkness. Doctors amputated Jackson's arm in an attempt to save his life. “He has lost his left arm,” moaned Lee, “but I have lost my right.” Eight days later, Jackson died of pneumonia.

In the West, too, Union forces seemed mired during the first half of 1863. General Rosecrans was bogged down in a costly and unsuccessful campaign to take the vital rail center at Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grant had settled in for a long siege at Vicksburg (see Map 14.1). Nowhere did there seem to be a prospect for the dramatic victory Lincoln needed.

The summer of 1863, however, turned out to be a major turning point in the war. Facing superior northern resources and rising inflation, Confederate leaders met in Richmond to consider their options. Lee proposed another major invasion of the United States, arguing that such a maneuver would allow the Confederates to gather supplies and might encourage the northern peace movement, revitalize the prospects of foreign recognition, and perhaps capture the Union capital. Confederate leaders agreed and approved Lee's plan.

Lee's advance met only weak opposition as the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River and marched into Union territory (see Map 14.2). In Maryland and Pennsylvania the troops seized livestock, supplies, food, clothing, and shoes. Union forces had been converging on the area of **Gettysburg**, Pennsylvania, since early June, anticipating Lee's move but unsure of his exact intention. Learning that the Federals were waiting and believing them to be weaker than they were, on June 29 Lee moved to engage the Union forces. Meade, who had been trailing Lee's army as it marched north from Chancellorsville, immediately dispatched a detachment to reinforce Gettysburg. On the following day, the two armies began a furious three-day battle.

Arriving in force on July 1, Meade took up an almost impregnable defensive position on the hills along Cemetery Ridge. The Confederates hammered both ends of the Union line but could gain no ground. On the third day, Lee ordered a major assault on the middle of the Union position. Eleven brigades, more than thirteen thousand men, led by fresh troops under Major General George E. Pickett, tried to cross open ground and take the hills held by Meade while Major J. E. B. “Jeb” Stuart's cavalry attacked from the east. Lee made few strategic mistakes during the war, but Pickett's charge was foolhardy. Meade's forces drove off the attack. The whole field was “dotted with our soldiers,” wrote one Confederate officer. Lee met his retreating troops with the words “It's all my fault, my fault.” Losses on both sides were high, but Confederate casualties exceeded twenty-eight thousand men, more than half of Lee's army. Lee retreated, his invasion of the North a failure.

On the heels of this major victory for the North came news from Mississippi that Vicksburg had fallen to Grant's siege on July 4. Sherman had been beating back Confederate forces in central Mississippi, and Union guns had been shelling the city continuously for nearly seven weeks, driving residents into caves and barricaded shelters. But it was starvation and disease that finally subdued the defenders. Then on July 9, after

**Gettysburg** Site in Pennsylvania where in July 1863, Union forces under General George Meade defeated Lee's Confederate forces, turning back Lee's invasion of the North.

receiving news of Vicksburg's fate, **Port Hudson**, the last Confederate garrison on the Mississippi River, also surrendered. The Mississippi River was totally under Union control. The "Father of Waters," said Lincoln, "again goes unvexed to the sea."

Despite jubilation over the recent victories, Lincoln and the North remained frustrated. Northern newspapers proclaiming Gettysburg to be the last gasp of the South had anticipated an immediate southern surrender, but Meade, like McClellan, acted with extreme caution and failed to pursue Lee and his retreating troops. Back in Washington, Lincoln waited for word of Lee's capture, believing it would signal the end of the rebellion. When he learned of Lee's escape, the president said in disbelief, "Our Army held the war in the hollow of their hand and they would not close it." With Lee and his army intact, the war, which in July had appeared to be so nearly over, was in Lincoln's words, "prolonged indefinitely." Lincoln needed a new kind of general.

### Grant, Sherman, and the Invention of Total War

In late fall of 1863, Lincoln took a break from his duties in the White House to participate in the dedication of a national cemetery at the site where, just months before, the Battle of Gettysburg had taken the lives of thousands. In the speech he delivered on November 19, 1863, Lincoln dedicated not only the cemetery but the war effort itself to the fallen soldiers, and also to a principle. "Fourscore and seven years ago," Lincoln said, "our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Though delivered in a low voice that most of the crowd could not hear, the **Gettysburg Address** was circulated in the media and galvanized many Americans who had come to doubt the war's purpose.

Grant, too, raised Northern morale by leading the defeat of a Confederate challenge in Tennessee. Lincoln, delighted with Grant's successes, promoted him to general in chief on March 10, 1864. Grant immediately left his command in the West to prepare an all-out attack on Lee and Virginia, authorizing Sherman to pursue a campaign into Georgia.

In Grant and Sherman, Lincoln had found what he needed. On the surface, neither seemed a likely candidate for a major role in the Union army. Both were West Point graduates but left the army after the War with Mexico to seek their fortunes. Neither had succeeded in civilian life: Grant was a binge drinker who had accomplished little, and Sherman had failed as a banker and a lawyer. Both were "political generals," owing their Civil War commissions to the influence of friends or relatives. Despite their checkered pasts, these two men invented a new type of warfare that eventually brought the South to its knees. Grant and Sherman were willing to wage **total war** in order to destroy the South's will to continue the struggle.

Preparing for the new sort of war he was about to inaugurate, Grant suspended prisoner-of-war exchanges. Realizing that the Confederates needed soldiers badly, he understood that one outcome of this policy would be slow death by starvation for Union prisoners. Cruel though his policy was, Grant reasoned that victory was his primary goal and that suffering and death were unavoidable in war. Throughout the remainder of the war, this single-mindedness pushed Grant to make decisions that cost tens of thousands of lives on both sides.

On May 4, Grant and Meade moved toward Richmond and Robert E. Lee. The next day, Union and Confederate armies collided in a tangle of woods called **The Wilderness**, near Chancellorsville. Two days of bloody fighting followed, broken by a night during which hundreds of the wounded burned to death in brushfires that raged between the

**Port Hudson** Confederate garrison in Louisiana that surrendered to Union forces in July 1863, thus giving the Union unrestricted control of the Mississippi River.

**Gettysburg Address** A speech given by Abraham Lincoln on November 19, 1863, dedicating a national cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; it expressed Lincoln's maturing view of the war and its purpose.

**total war** War waged with little regard for the welfare of troops on either side or for enemy civilians; the objective is to destroy both the human and the economic resources of the enemy.

**The Wilderness** Densely wooded region of Virginia that was the site in May 1864 of a devastating but inconclusive battle between Union forces under Grant and Confederates under Lee.

**Cold Harbor** Area of Virginia, about 10 miles from Richmond, where Grant made an unsuccessful attempt to drive his forces through Lee's center.

**vanguard** The foremost position in any army advancing into battle.

**Andrew Johnson** Tennessee senator who became Lincoln's running mate in 1864 and who succeeded to the presidency after Lincoln's assassination.

**Copperheads** Derogatory term (the name of a poisonous snake) applied to northerners who supported the South during the Civil War.

two lines. Grant decided to skirt Lee's troops and head for Richmond, but Lee anticipated the maneuver and blocked Grant's route at Spotsylvania. Twelve days of fighting ensued. Grant again attempted to move around Lee, and again Lee anticipated him. On June 1, the two armies met at **Cold Harbor**, Virginia. After each side had consolidated its position, Grant ordered a series of frontal attacks against the entrenched Confederates on June 3. Lee's veteran troops waited patiently in perhaps the best position they had ever defended, while Union soldiers expecting to die marched toward them. The assault failed amid unspeakable slaughter. But Grant's seeming wantonness was calculated, for the Confederates lost more than twenty-five thousand troops. And Grant knew, as did Lee, that the Union could afford the losses but the Confederacy could not.

After Cold Harbor, Grant guessed that Lee would expect him to try to assault nearby Richmond next. This time, though, he steered the Union army south of Richmond for Petersburg to try to take the vital rail center and cut off the southern capital. Once again, Lee reacted quickly: He rapidly shifted the **vanguard** of his troops, beat back Grant's advance, and occupied Petersburg. Grant bitterly regretted this failure, feeling that he could have ended the war. Instead, the campaign settled into a siege that neither side wanted. Lee and the Confederates could ill afford a siege that ate up supplies and munitions. And elections were rapidly approaching in the Union.

### The Election of 1864, and Sherman's March to the Sea

Lincoln was under fire from two directions. On May 31, 1864, the Republicans met in Cleveland and dumped him from the ticket, officially nominating John C. Frémont as their presidential candidate. Lincoln supporters, who began calling themselves the Union Party, held their nominating convention in June and renominated Lincoln. To attract Democrats who still favored fighting for a clear victory, Union Party delegates dumped Republican Hannibal Hamlin and chose **Andrew Johnson**, a southern Democrat, as Lincoln's running mate. Then, in August, the Democratic National Convention met at Chicago. The Democrats pulled together many **Copperheads** and other northerners who were so upset by the heavy casualties that they were determined to stop the war, even at the cost of allowing slavery to continue. The Democrats selected McClellan as their presidential candidate and included a peace plank in their platform. Thus Lincoln sat squarely in the middle between one group that castigated him for pursuing the war and another group that rebuked him for failing to defeat the South quickly enough.

Serving a single, six-year term, Confederate president Jefferson Davis did not face an election in 1864, but he too had plenty of political problems. As deprivation and military losses mounted, some factions began to resist the war effort. The Confederate congress called for a new draft, but several states refused to comply. Governors in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, who controlled their state's militia, kept troops at home and defied Davis to enforce conscription.

Eager to solve their problems, Lincoln and Confederate vice president Alexander H. Stephens had conversations about negotiating a settlement. Lincoln stated his terms: reunion, abolition, and amnesty for rank-and-file Confederates. Southern officials balked, pointing out that "amnesty" applied to criminals and that the South had "committed no crime." The only possible outcomes of the war for the South, they concluded, were independence or extermination, even if it meant enduring the sight of "every Southern plantation sacked and every Southern city in flames." The words proved prophetic.

Grant had instructed Sherman "to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources." Sherman



# It Matters Today

## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

When the Civil War began, Lincoln made it clear that defending the Constitution was his only objective. But when he spoke on the Gettysburg battlefield two years later, commemorating the deaths of the thousands who fell there, he gave voice to a broader vision and a more noble goal. In that speech, Lincoln referenced the Declaration of Independence, *not* the Constitution, transforming Thomas Jefferson's stirring announcement of Enlightenment principle that "all men are created equal" into the central element in the great American struggle. Lincoln's speech changed the conception of the Constitution itself. After Lincoln's death, Congress enacted the Fourteenth Amendment, transforming Jefferson's—and Lincoln's—statement of principle into the law

of the land. To this day, "we hold this truth to be self-evident" in principle and in law through the Constitution Lincoln envisioned in that speech.

- What does the Gettysburg Address reflect about popular attitudes toward the war following the Battle of Gettysburg? Given what you know about the era, what do you think explains the speech's impact?
- In what significant ways did the principles stated by Lincoln at Gettysburg modify the nation's understanding of the Constitution? How has this understanding manifested itself in legislation and landmark legal cases in recent years?

responded with a vengeance. Slowly and skillfully his army advanced southward from Tennessee toward Atlanta, one of the South's few remaining industrial centers, against Confederate armies under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston. Only Johnston's skillful retreats kept Sherman from annihilating his army. President Davis then replaced Johnston with John Bell Hood, who vowed to take the offensive. Hood attacked, but Sherman inflicted such serious casualties that Hood had to retreat to Atlanta.

For days Sherman shelled Atlanta and wrought havoc in the surrounding countryside. When a last-ditch southern attack failed, Hood evacuated the city on September 1. The victorious Union troops moved in and occupied Atlanta on the following day. Sherman's victory caused tremendous despair among Confederates but gave great momentum to Lincoln's reelection campaign.

This victory proved the decisive factor in the election of 1864. Sherman's success defused McClellan's argument that Lincoln was not competent to direct the Union's military fortunes and quelled much antiwar sentiment in the North. Equally discredited, the Radical Republican platform and the Frémont candidacy disappeared before election day. As late as August, Lincoln had been expecting to lose the election in November, but the victory in Atlanta gave him some hope. When the votes were counted, Lincoln learned that he had defeated McClellan—by half a million popular votes and by a landslide margin of 212 to 21 in the Electoral College.

Sherman soon grew bored with the occupation of Atlanta and posed a bold plan to Grant. He wanted to ignore Hood, leave the battered Confederates loose at his rear, go on the offensive, and "cut a swath through to the sea." "I can make Georgia howl," he promised. Despite some misgivings, Grant agreed and convinced Lincoln.

A week after the election, Sherman began preparing for his 300-mile **March to the Sea**. His intentions were clear. "We are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people," he stated. By devastating the countryside and destroying the South's ability to conduct war, he intended to break down southerners' will to resist. "We cannot change

**March to the Sea** Sherman's march through Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah from November 15 to December 21, 1864, during which Union soldiers carried out orders to destroy everything in their path.

the hearts of those people of the South,” he concluded, but we can “make them so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it.” With that, he burned Atlanta’s warehouses and then set out on his march to Savannah. His troops foraged for food and supplies along the way and destroyed rail lines and bridges found in their path. Sherman entered Savannah unopposed on December 21.

The March to the Sea completed, Sherman turned north. In South Carolina, the first state to secede and fire shots, Sherman’s troops took special delight in ravaging the countryside. When they reached Columbia, flames engulfed the city. Whether Sherman’s men or retreating Confederates started the blaze remains unclear, but African American regiments in Sherman’s command helped to put out the fires after Sherman occupied the South Carolina capital on February 17, 1865.

With the state capital in flames, Confederate forces abandoned their posts in South Carolina, moving north to join with Joseph E. Johnston’s army in an effort to stop Sherman from crossing North Carolina and joining Grant in Virginia. Union forces quickly moved into abandoned southern strongholds, including Charleston, where Major Robert Anderson, who had commanded Fort Sumter in April 1861, returned to raise the Union flag over the fort that he had surrendered four years earlier.

### The End of Lee and Lincoln

Under increasing pressure from Sherman, the Confederacy’s military situation was deteriorating rapidly. In a last-ditch effort to keep the Confederacy alive, Lee advised Davis to evacuate Richmond—the army intended to abandon the capital, moving west as rapidly as possible toward Lynchburg. From there Lee hoped to use surviving rail lines to move his troops south to join with Johnston’s force in North Carolina. The unified armies might then halt Sherman’s advance and wheel around to deal with Grant.

Suffering none of his predecessors’ indecisiveness, Grant ordered an immediate assault as Lee’s forces retreated from Petersburg. Lee had little ammunition, almost no food, and only thirty-five thousand men. As they retreated westward, under constant pressure from harassing attacks, hundreds of southern soldiers collapsed from hunger and exhaustion. By April 9, Union forces had surrounded Lee’s broken army. Saying, “There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant,” Lee sent a note offering surrender.

The two generals met at a private home in the little village of Appomattox Court-house, Virginia. Grant offered generous terms, allowing Confederate officers and men to go home “so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they reside.” This guaranteed them immunity from prosecution for treason and became the model for surrender. Grant sent the starving Confederates rations and let them keep their horses.

On the following day, Lincoln addressed a crowd outside the White House about his hopes and plans for rebuilding the nation. He talked about the need for flexibility in pulling the nation back together after the long and bitter conflict. He had already taken steps to bring southerners back into the Union. In December 1863, he had issued a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction offering pardons to any Confederates who would take a loyalty oath. After his reelection in 1864, Lincoln had begun to plan for the Confederacy’s eventual surrender, and he pushed for a constitutional ban on slavery, which passed on January 31, 1865.

With victory at hand and a peace plan in place, on April 14 Lincoln chose to relax by attending a play at Ford’s Theater in Washington. At about ten o’clock, **John Wilkes Booth**, an actor and a southern sympathizer, entered the president’s box and shot him. On following morning, Lincoln died.

**John Wilkes Booth** Actor and southern sympathizer who on April 14, 1865, five days after Lee’s surrender, fatally shot President Lincoln at Ford’s Theater in Washington.

Even though Lincoln was dead and Lee had fallen, the war continued. Joseph E. Johnston did not surrender until April 18. Jefferson Davis remained in hiding and called for guerrilla warfare and continued resistance. But one by one, the Confederate officers surrendered. On May 10, Davis was captured near Irwinville, Georgia, and placed in prison. Andrew Johnson, who had assumed the presidency upon Lincoln's death, issued a statement to the American people that armed rebellion against legitimate authority could be considered "virtually at an end."

## Summary

Both the Union and the Confederacy entered the war in 1861 with glowing hopes. Jefferson Davis pursued a defensive strategy, certain that northerners would soon tire of war and let the South withdraw from the Union. Abraham Lincoln countered by using the superior human, economic, and natural resources of the North to strangle the South into submission. But both leaders became increasingly frustrated during the first year of the war.

For Lincoln, the greatest frustration was military leadership. Beginning with the first Battle of Bull Run, Union forces seemed unable to win any major battles despite their numerical superiority. Although Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant's command scored victories in the Mississippi Valley, the Federals were stalemated. Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson seemed able to defeat any Union general that Lincoln sent to oppose them.

The war's nature and direction changed after the fall of 1862, however. Lee invaded Maryland and was defeated at Antietam. Despite this crushing loss, Union generals still failed to capture Lee or to subdue Confederate forces in Virginia. Still angered by military blundering, political attacks, and popular unrest, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in an effort to undermine southern efforts and unify northern ones. After the proclamation, the only option for either side was total victory or total defeat.

After further reversals in the spring of 1863, Union forces turned the tide in the war by defeating Lee's army at Gettysburg and taking Vicksburg to gain full control of the Mississippi. With an election drawing near, Lincoln spurred his generals to deal the death blow to the

Confederacy, and two in particular rose to the occasion. During the last half of 1864, William Tecumseh Sherman wreaked havoc, making Georgia "howl." And Grant, in a wanton display of disregard for human life, drove Lee into a defensive corner. In November, buoyed by Sherman's victories in Georgia, Lincoln was reelected.

Suffering was not confined to those at the front. Governments in both the North and the South had to dig deep into depleting economic resources to keep the war effort going. Inflation plagued both nations, and common people faced hunger, disease, and insufficient police protection. Riots broke out in major cities, including New York. But throughout the country many people responded heroically to their own privations and to suffering at the front. Women faced up to epidemics, enemy gunfire, and gender bias to institute public health standards and bring solace to suffering civilians and soldiers alike.

As hope dwindled for the South in the spring of 1865, Lee made a final desperate effort to keep the flagging Confederacy alive, racing to unify the last surviving remnants of the once-proud southern army. But Grant closed a net of steel around Lee's troops, forcing surrender. Lincoln immediately promoted a gentle policy for reunion, but his assassination ended this effort. The saintly American hero was gone, leaving a southern Democrat—Andrew Johnson—as president and a nation reeling in shock. The war was over, but the issues were still unresolved. Both the North and the South were beset with uncertainty about what would follow four years of suffering and sacrifice.

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# Reconstruction: High Hopes and Shattered Dreams

## 1865–1877

# CHAPTER 15

### INDIVIDUAL CHOICES: *Blanche K. Bruce*

Rarely had the world changed so swiftly. Just eighteen years before in the Dred Scott decision, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney had pronounced that black Americans, even if free, were not citizens of the United States. Now, on a cold January day in 1875, Blanche Kelso Bruce, a former slave, raised his right hand to take the oath of office as U.S. Senator from Mississippi.

On the morning of his swearing-in, Bruce was still a young man. Born on March 1, 1841, in Farmville, Virginia, the boy then known as Branch and his five siblings were slaves because their mother, Polly Bruce, was a slave, and in the southern states legal status descended through the mother. Polly was a light-skinned domestic—her mother, an African woman, had been raped by a slave trader. But Branch was lighter still, because his father was also his master, Pettis Perkinsen. In the language of the Old South, that made the boy a “quadroon,” three-quarters white, yet still a slave. Branch later insisted that his master treated him as “tenderly” as he treated his white children. Branch—who changed his name to Blanche while still in his teens—was taught to read.

In 1861, when Blanche’s white half-brother, William Perkinsen, left home to join the Confederate army, Blanche decided the day had at last arrived “to emancipate [him]self.” Although Missouri was officially still part of the United States, roughly half of the state’s young men marched south to join the Confederacy. Using the exodus as cover, walking and begging rides on passing wagons when he could, Blanche crossed the Mississippi River into Lincoln’s Illinois, and he kept going until he reached Ohio. One year later, his brother Henry ran off to join him, bringing a slave girl he would later marry.

Bruce briefly attended Oberlin College, the rural Ohio school widely known for its abolitionist origins and progressive attitudes on educational integration. His meager financial resources forced him to withdraw, but with the war over,

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

#### **Presidential Reconstruction**

- Republican War Aims
- Approach to Reconstruction: “With Malice Toward None”
- Abolishing Slavery Forever: The Thirteenth Amendment
- Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction

#### **INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Mississippi Black Code, 1865**

#### **Congressional Reconstruction**

- Challenging Presidential Reconstruction
- The Civil Rights Act of 1866
- Defining Citizenship: The Fourteenth Amendment
- IT MATTERS TODAY:** The Fourteenth Amendment
- Radicals in Control

#### **Freedom and the Legacy of Slavery**

- Defining the Meaning of Freedom
- Creating Communities
- Land and Labor
- INVESTIGATING AMERICA: Jourdan Anderson’s Proposition, 1865**
- Political Terrorism and the Election of 1868
- Voting Rights and Civil Rights

#### **Black Reconstruction**

- The Republican Party in the South
- Creating an Educational System and Fighting Discrimination

#### **The End of Reconstruction**

- The “New Departure”
- The 1872 Presidential Election
- THE POLITICS OF TERROR: The “Mississippi Plan”**
- The Compromise of 1877
- After Reconstruction

#### **Summary**



#### **BLANCHE K. BRUCE**

*Born to a slave mother and a white father, Blanche Kelso Bruce represented Mississippi as a Republican senator from 1875 to 1881. Only 34 years old, Bruce became the first African American to complete a full term in the Senate.* Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. [LC-USZ62-38572].

a classmate alerted him to new opportunities in the defeated southern states. Northern newspapers were filled with stories about the political battles between President Andrew Johnson and the Republican majority, and Bruce realized that Congress was serious about forcing a new political and economic order on the South. Arriving in Mississippi in February 1869—a state not yet readmitted to the Union—the industrious Bruce borrowed money to purchase land in Bolivar County, where blacks held the majority. He quickly won elections for sheriff, tax collector, and superintendent of education, all while editing a local newspaper. On February 3, 1874, Bruce was chosen by the state legislature to serve in the U.S. Senate. He was thirty-two years of age and became the first black American to serve a full term in the Senate. Bruce rode north toward Washington to join black congressmen representing districts in Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, and Florida. The political world had truly been turned upside down.

**freed people** Former slaves; *freed people* is the term used by historians to refer to former slaves, whether male or female.

**emancipation** The release from slavery.

**secede** To withdraw from membership in an organization; in this case, the withdrawal of eleven southern states from the United States in 1860–1861, giving rise to the Civil War.

**B**lanche Bruce was not the only African American who claimed freedom while the war was raging. Anderson's experience was repeated time and time again, with many variations, all across the South. Those decisions were made legal by the Emancipation Proclamation, enforced by the presence of Union armies, and made permanent by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The **freed people** now faced a wide range of new decisions—where to live, where to work, how to create their own communities.

The war left many parts of the South in a shambles. Though southerners were dismayed by their ravaged countryside, many white southerners were even more distressed by the **emancipation** of 4 million slaves. In 1861, fears for the future of slavery under Republicans had caused the South to attempt to **secede** from the Union. With the end of the war, fears became reality. The end of slavery forced southerners of both races to develop new social, economic, and political patterns.

The years following the war were a time of physical rebuilding throughout the South, but the term *Reconstruction* refers primarily to the rebuilding of the federal Union and to the political, economic, and social changes that came to the South as it was restored to the nation. Reconstruction involved some of the most momentous questions in American history. How was the defeated South to be treated? What was to be the future of the 4 million former slaves? Should key decisions be made by the federal government or in state capitols and county courthouses throughout the South? Which branch of the government was to establish policies?

As the Republicans turned their attention from waging war to reconstructing the Union, they wrote into law and the Constitution new definitions of the Union itself. They also defined the rights of the former slaves and the terms on which the South might rejoin the United States. And they permanently changed the definition of American citizenship.

Most white southerners disliked the new rules emerging from the federal government, and some resisted. Disagreement over the future of the South and the status of the former slaves led to conflict between the president and Congress. A temporary result of this conflict was a more powerful Congress and a less powerful executive. A lasting outcome of these events was a significant increase in the power of the federal government and new limits on local and state governments.

Reconstruction significantly changed many aspects of southern life. In the end, however, Reconstruction failed to fulfill many African Americans' hopes for their lives as free people; for many Americans, Reconstruction simply did not go far enough.

# Chronology

<b>1863</b>	Emancipation Proclamation The Ten Percent Plan	<b>1868</b>	Impeachment of President Johnson Fourteenth Amendment (defining citizenship) ratified
<b>1864</b>	Abraham Lincoln reelected		Ulysses S. Grant elected president
<b>1865</b>	Freedmen's Bureau created Civil War ends Lincoln assassinated Andrew Johnson becomes president Thirteenth Amendment (abolishing slavery) ratified	<b>1869–1870</b>	Victories of "New Departure" Democrats in some southern states
<b>1866</b>	Ku Klux Klan formed Congress begins to assert control over Reconstruction Civil Rights Act of 1866 Riots by whites in Memphis and New Orleans	<b>1870</b>	Fifteenth Amendment (guaranteeing voting rights) ratified
<b>1867</b>	Military Reconstruction Act Command of the Army Act Tenure of Office Act	<b>1870–1871</b>	Ku Klux Klan Acts
		<b>1872</b>	Grant reelected
		<b>1875</b>	Civil Rights Act of 1875
		<b>1876</b>	Mississippi Plan ends Reconstruction in Mississippi
		<b>1877</b>	Disputed presidential election: Hayes versus Tilden Compromise of 1877 Rutherford B. Hayes becomes president End of Reconstruction

## Presidential Reconstruction

★ **What did Presidents Lincoln and Johnson seek to accomplish through their Reconstruction policies? How did their purposes differ? In what ways were their policies similar?**

★ **How did white southerners respond to the Reconstruction efforts of Lincoln and Johnson? What does this suggest about the expectations of white southerners?**

On New Year's Day 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. More than four years earlier, Abraham Lincoln had insisted that "this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." With the Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln began the legal process by which the nation became entirely free. At first, the Proclamation did not affect any slave because it abolished slavery only in territory under Confederate control, where it was unenforceable. But every advance of a Union army after January 1 brought the law of the land—and emancipation—to the Confederacy.

### Republican War Aims

For Lincoln and the Republican Party, freedom for the slaves became a central concern partly because **abolitionists** were an influential group within the party. During the 1860 electoral campaign, the Republican Party had promised only to prohibit slavery in the territories, and Lincoln initially defined the war as one to maintain the Union. Some leading Republicans, however, favored abolition of slavery everywhere.

**abolitionist** An individual who condemns slavery as morally wrong and seeks to abolish (eliminate) slavery.

**Radical Republicans** A group within the Republican Party during the Civil War and Reconstruction that advocated abolition of slavery, citizenship for the former slaves, and sweeping alteration of the South.

**racial integration** Equal opportunities to participate in a society or organization by people of different racial groups; the absence of race-based barriers to full and equal participation.

And abolitionists throughout the North—including Frederick Douglass, himself an escaped slave—began to argue that emancipation would be meaningless unless the government guaranteed the civil and political rights of the former slaves. Thus some Republicans expanded their definition of war objectives to include abolishing slavery, extending citizenship for the former slaves, and guaranteeing the equality of all citizens before the law. At the time, these were extreme views on abolition and equal rights, and the people who held them were called **Radical Republicans**, or simply Radicals.

Thaddeus Stevens, 73 years old in 1865, was perhaps the leading Radical in the House of Representatives. Born with a clubfoot, Stevens always identified with those outside the social mainstream. He became a compelling spokesman for abolition and an uncompromising advocate of equal rights for African Americans. Stevens, a masterful parliamentarian known for his honesty and his sarcastic wit, urged from the beginning of the war that the slaves be not only freed but also armed to fight the Confederacy. By the end of the war, some 180,000 African Americans, the great majority of them freed men, had served in the U.S. army and a few thousand in the Union navy. Many more worked for the army as laborers.

Another leading Radical was Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, who had argued for **racial integration** of Massachusetts schools in 1849 and won election to the U.S. Senate in 1851. Immediately establishing himself as the Senate's foremost champion of abolition, he became a martyr to the cause after he suffered a severe beating in 1856 because of an antislavery speech. After emancipation, Sumner, like Stevens, fought for full political and civil rights for the freed people.

Stevens, Sumner, and other Radicals demanded a drastic restructuring not only of the South's political system but also of its economy. They opposed slavery on moral grounds, but also because they believed free labor was more productive. Slaves worked to escape punishment, they argued, but free workers worked to benefit themselves. Eliminating slavery and instituting a free-labor system in its place would benefit everyone by increasing the nation's productivity. Free labor not only contributed centrally to the dynamism of the North's economy, it was crucial to democracy itself. “The middling classes who own the soil, and work it with their own hands,” Stevens once proclaimed, “are the main support of every free government.” For the South to be fully democratic, the Radicals concluded, it had to elevate free labor to a position of honor.

Not all Republicans agreed with the Radicals. All Republicans had objected to slavery, but not all Republicans were abolitionists. Similarly, not all Republicans wanted to extend full citizenship rights to the former slaves. Some favored rapid restoration of the South to the Union so that the federal government could concentrate on stimulating the nation's economy and developing the West.

### Lincoln's Approach to Reconstruction: “With Malice Toward None”

After the Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln and the congressional Republicans agreed that the abolition of slavery had to be a condition for the return of the South to the Union. Major differences soon appeared, however, over other terms for reunion and the roles of the president and Congress in establishing those terms. In his second inaugural address, a month before his death, Lincoln defined the task facing the nation: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.”

Lincoln began to rebuild the Union on the basis of these principles. He hoped to hasten the end of the war by encouraging southerners to renounce the Confederacy and to accept emancipation. As soon as Union armies occupied portions of southern states,

he appointed temporary military governors for those regions and tried to restore civil government as quickly as possible.

Drawing on the president's constitutional power to issue **pardons** (Article II, Section 2), Lincoln issued a Proclamation of **Amnesty** and Reconstruction in December 1863. Often called the "Ten Percent Plan," it promised a full pardon and restoration of rights to those who swore their loyalty to the Union and accepted the abolition of slavery. Only high-ranking Confederate leaders were not eligible. Once those who had taken the oath in a state amounted to 10 percent of the number of votes cast by that state in the 1860 presidential election, the pardoned voters were to write a new state constitution that abolished slavery, elect state officials, and resume self-government. Some congressional Radicals disagreed with Lincoln's approach. When they tried to set more stringent standards, however, Lincoln blocked them, fearing their plan would slow the restoration of civil government and perhaps even lengthen the war.

**pardon** A governmental directive canceling punishment for a person or people who have committed a crime.

**Amnesty** A general pardon granted by a government, especially for political offenses.

### Abolishing Slavery Forever: The Thirteenth Amendment

Amid questions about the rights of freed people, congressional Republicans prepared the final destruction of slavery. The Emancipation Proclamation had been a wartime measure, justified by military necessity. It never applied in Union states. In early 1865, slavery remained legal in Delaware and Kentucky, and old, prewar state laws—which might or might not be valid—still permitted slavery in the states that had seceded. To destroy slavery forever, Congress in January 1865 approved the **Thirteenth Amendment**, which read simply, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

The Constitution requires any amendment to be ratified by three-fourths of the states—then twenty-seven of thirty-six. By December 1865, only nineteen of the twenty-five Union states had ratified the amendment. The measure passed, however, when eight of the reconstructed southern states approved it. In the end, therefore, the abolition of slavery hinged on action by reconstructed state governments in the South.

### Thirteenth Amendment

Constitutional amendment, ratified in 1865, that abolished slavery in the United States and its territories.

### Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction

After the assassination of Lincoln in April 1865, Vice President Andrew Johnson became president. Johnson was born in North Carolina. He never had the opportunity to attend school and spent his early life struggling against poverty. As a young man in Tennessee, he worked as a tailor before turning to politics. His wife tutored him in reading, writing, and arithmetic. A Democrat, Johnson relied on his oratorical skills to win several terms in the Tennessee legislature. He was elected to Congress and later was governor before winning election to the U.S. Senate in 1857. His political support came primarily from farmers and working people. The state's elite of plantation owners usually opposed him. Johnson, in turn, resented their wealth and power, and blamed them for secession and the Civil War.

Johnson was the only southern senator who rejected the Confederacy. Early in the war, Union forces captured Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, and Lincoln appointed Johnson as military governor. Johnson dealt harshly with Tennessee secessionists, especially wealthy planters. Radicals confused Johnson's severe treatment of former Confederates with sympathy for enslaved Tennesseans. Johnson was elected vice president in 1864, receiving the nomination in part because Lincoln wanted to appeal to Democrats and Unionists in border states.

**states' rights** A political position favoring limitation of the federal government's power and the greatest possible self-government by the individual states.

**empower** To increase the power or authority of some person or group.

**provisional** Temporary.

**repudiate** The act of rejecting the validity or authority of something; to refuse to pay.

**vagrancy** The legal condition of having no fixed place of residence or means of support.

**Ku Klux Klan** A secret society organized in the South after the Civil War to restore white supremacy by means of violence and intimidation.

When Johnson became president, Radicals hoped he would join their efforts to transform the South. As a Jacksonian Democrat, however, Johnson, soon made it clear that he was strongly committed to **states' rights** and opposed the Republicans' objective of a powerful federal government. "White men alone must manage the South," Johnson told one visitor. Self-righteous and uncompromising, Johnson saw the major task of Reconstruction as **empowering** the region's white middle class and excluding wealthy planters from power.

Johnson appointed **provisional** civilian governors for the southern states not already reconstructed. He instructed them to reconstitute functioning state administrations and to call constitutional conventions of delegates elected by pardoned voters. Some provisional governors, however, appointed former Confederates to state and local offices, outraging those who expected Reconstruction to bring to power loyal Unionists committed to a new southern society.

Johnson expected the state constitutional conventions to abolish slavery within each state, ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, renounce secession, and **repudiate** the states' war debts. State conventions during the summer of 1865 usually complied with these requirements, though some did so grudgingly. But Johnson specified nothing about the rights of the freed people, and every state rejected black suffrage.

By April 1866, a year after the close of the war, all the southern states had fulfilled Johnson's requirements for rejoining the Union and had elected legislators, governors, and members of Congress. Their choices troubled Johnson. He had hoped for the emergence of new political leaders in the South and was dismayed at the number of rich planters and former Confederate officials who won state contests.

Most white southerners, however, viewed Johnson as their protector, standing between them and the Radicals. His support for states' rights led white southerners to expect that they would shape the transition from slavery to freedom—that they, and not Congress, would define the status of the former slaves.

As civil governments began to function in late 1865 and 1866, state legislatures passed a series of "Black Codes" defining the new legal status of African Americans. These regulations varied from state to state, but every state placed significant restraints on black people. Most Black Codes required African Americans to have an annual employment contract, limited them to agricultural work, forbade them from moving about the countryside without permission, restricted their ownership of land, and provided for forced labor by those found guilty of **vagrancy**—which usually meant anyone without a job. Some Codes originated in prewar restrictions on slaves and free blacks. Some reflected efforts to ensure that farm workers would be on hand for planting, cultivating, and harvesting. Taken together, however, the Black Codes represented an effort by white southerners to define a legally subordinate place for African Americans and to put significant restrictions on their newly found freedom.

Some white southerners used violence to coerce freed people into accepting a subordinate status within the new southern society. Clara Barton, who had organized women as nurses for the Union army, visited the South from 1866 to 1870 and observed "a condition of lawlessness toward the blacks" and "a disposition . . . to injure or kill them on slight or no provocation."

Violence and terror became closely associated with the **Ku Klux Klan**, a secret organization formed in 1866 and led by a former Confederate general. The turn to terror suggests that Klan members felt themselves largely powerless through normal politics, and used terror to create a climate of fear among their opponents. Most Klan members were small-scale farmers and workers, but the leaders were often prominent within their own communities. As one Freedmen's Bureau agent observed about the Klan, "The most respectable

# Investigating America

## Mississippi Black Code, 1865

Pleased by Johnson's conservative approach to black rights, southern legislators sought to restore labor controls over their liberated work force by passing a series of laws collectively known as the Black Codes. They varied slightly from state to state in the defeated Confederacy, but the similarities found across state lines suggest white legislators frequently borrowed from laws passed in neighboring states. Mississippi's law of 1865, excerpted here, reveals what sort of legislative social and economic barriers confronted black veterans returning home from Lincoln's armies.

.....  
**A**n Act to Confer Civil Rights on Freedmen, and for other Purposes

Section 1. All freedmen, free negroes and mulattoes may sue and be sued . . . in all the courts of law and equity of this State, and may acquire personal property, and chooses in action, by descent or purchase, and may dispose of the same in the same manner and to the same extent that white persons may: Provided, That the provisions of this section shall not be so construed as to allow any freedman, free negro or mulatto to rent or lease any lands or tenements except in incorporated cities or towns, in which places the corporate authorities shall control the same. . . .

Section 3. All freedmen, free negroes or mulattoes who do now and have herebefore lived and cohabited together as husband and wife shall be taken and held in law as legally

married, and the issue shall be taken and held as legitimate for all purposes; and it shall not be lawful for any freedman, free negro or mulatto to intermarry with any white person; nor for any person to intermarry with any freedman, free negro or mulatto; and any person who shall so intermarry shall be deemed guilty of felony, and on conviction thereof shall be confined in the State penitentiary for life. . . .

Section 5. Every freedman, free negro and mulatto shall, on the second Monday of January, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, and annually thereafter, have a lawful home or employment, and shall have written evidence thereof . . . from the member of the board of police of his beat, authorizing him or her to do irregular and job work; or a written contract, as provided in Section 6 in this act; which license may be revoked for cause at any time by the authority granting the same. . . . Every civil officer shall, and every person may, arrest and carry back to his or her legal employer any freedman, free negro, or mulatto who shall have quit the service of his or her employer before the expiration of his or her term of service without good cause. . . .

- .....
- How was the title of this law chosen to disguise its true intent? What rights did former slaves gain under this law? How were the Black Codes similar to slavery?
  - Why did these codes, and Johnson's refusal to condemn them, infuriate northern voters and veterans?



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citizens are engaged in it." Klan groups existed throughout the South, but operated with little central control. Their major goals were to restore **white supremacy** and to destroy the Republican Party. Other, similar organizations also formed and adopted similar tactics.

In 1866 two events dramatized the violence that some white southerners were inflicting on African Americans. In early May, in Memphis, Tennessee, black veterans of the Union army came to the assistance of a black man being arrested by white police, setting off a three-day riot in which whites, including police, indiscriminately attacked African Americans. Forty-five blacks and three whites died. In late July, in New Orleans, some forty people died, most of them African Americans, in an altercation between police and a largely black pro-suffrage group. General Philip Sheridan, the military commander of the district, called it "an absolute massacre by the police." Events like these in Memphis and New Orleans were unusual only in the numbers of casualties.

**white supremacy** The racist belief that whites are inherently superior to all other races and are therefore entitled to rule over them.

## Congressional Reconstruction

- ★ **Why did congressional Republicans take control over Reconstruction policy? What did they seek to accomplish? How successful were they?**
- ★ **How did the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments change the nature of the federal Union?**

The Black Codes, violence against freed people, and the failure of southern authorities to stem the violence turned northern opinion against President Johnson's lenient approach to Reconstruction. Increasing numbers of moderate Republicans accepted the Radicals' arguments that the freed people required greater federal protection, and congressional Republicans moved to take control of Reconstruction. When stubborn and uncompromising Andrew Johnson ran up against the equally stubborn and uncompromising Thaddeus Stevens, the nation faced a constitutional crisis.

### Challenging Presidential Reconstruction

In December 1865, the Thirty-ninth Congress (elected in 1864) met for the first time. Republicans outnumbered Democrats by more than three to one. President Johnson proclaimed Reconstruction complete and the Union restored, but few Republicans agreed. Events in the South had convinced most Republicans of the need to protect free labor in the South and to establish basic rights for the freed people. Most also agreed that Congress could withhold representation from the South until reconstructed state governments met these conditions.

On the first day of the Thirty-ninth Congress, moderate Republicans joined Radicals to exclude newly elected congressmen from the South. Citing Article I, Section 5, of the Constitution (which makes each house of Congress the judge of the qualifications of its members), Republicans set up a Joint Committee on Reconstruction to evaluate the qualifications of the excluded southerners and to determine whether the southern states were entitled to representation. In the meantime, the former Confederate states had no representation in Congress.

Congressional Republicans also moved to provide more assistance to the freed people. Moderates and Radicals approved a bill extending the Freedmen's Bureau and giving it more authority against racial discrimination. When Johnson vetoed it, Congress drafted a slightly revised version. Similar Republican unity produced a **civil rights** bill, a far-reaching measure that extended citizenship to African Americans and defined some of the rights guaranteed to all citizens. Johnson vetoed both the civil rights bill and the revised Freedmen's Bureau bill, but Congress passed both over his veto. With creation of a Joint Committee on Reconstruction and passage of the Civil Rights and Freedmen's Bureau Acts, Congress took control of Reconstruction.

### The Civil Rights Act of 1866

**civil rights** The rights, privileges, and protections that are a part of citizenship.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 defined all persons born in the United States (except Indians not taxed) as citizens. It also listed certain rights of all citizens, including the right to testify in court, own property, make contracts, bring lawsuits, and enjoy "full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property." This was the first effort to define in law some of the rights of American citizenship. It placed significant restrictions on state actions on the grounds that the rights of national citizenship took precedence over the powers of state governments. The law expanded the power of the federal government in unprecedented ways and challenged traditional concepts of states' rights.

When President Johnson vetoed the bill, he argued that it violated states' rights. By defending states' rights and confronting his opponents, Johnson may have hoped to turn voters against the Radicals and generate enough political support to elect a conservative Congress in 1866 and to win the presidency in 1868. Instead, the veto led most moderate Republicans to abandon hope of cooperating with him. In April 1866, when Congress passed the Civil Rights Act over Johnson's veto, it was the first time ever that Congress had overridden a presidential veto of major legislation.

### Defining Citizenship: The Fourteenth Amendment

Leading Republicans, though pleased that the Civil Rights Act was now law, worried that it could be amended or repealed by a later Congress or declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Only a constitutional amendment, they concluded, could permanently safeguard the freed people's rights as citizens.

The **Fourteenth Amendment** began as a proposal made by Radicals seeking a constitutional guarantee of equality before the law. But the final wording—the longest of any amendment—resulted from many compromises. Section 1 of the amendment defined American citizenship in much the same way as defined in the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and then specified that:

*No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

The Constitution and Bill of Rights prohibit federal interference with basic civil rights. The Fourteenth Amendment extends this protection against action by state governments.

The amendment was vague on some points. For example, it penalized states that did not **enfranchise** African Americans by reducing their congressional and electoral representation, but it did not specifically guarantee to African Americans the right to vote.

Some provisions of the amendment stemmed from Republicans' fears that a restored South, allied with northern Democrats, might try to undo the outcome of the war. One section barred from public office anyone who had sworn to uphold the federal Constitution and then "engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same." Only Congress could override this provision. (In 1872 Congress did pardon nearly all former Confederates.) The amendment also prohibited federal or state governments from assuming any of the Confederate debt or from paying any claim arising from emancipation.

Not everyone approved of the final wording. Charles Sumner condemned the provision that permitted a state to deny suffrage to male citizens if it accepted a penalty in congressional representation. Stevens wanted to bar former Confederates not just from holding office but also from voting. Woman suffrage advocates, led by **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Susan B. Anthony**, complained that the amendment, for the first time, introduced the word *male* into the Constitution in connection with voting rights.

Despite such concerns, Congress approved the Fourteenth Amendment by a straight party vote in June 1866 and sent it to the states for ratification. Tennessee promptly ratified the amendment, became the first reconstructed state government to be recognized by Congress, and was exempted from most future Reconstruction legislation.

Although Congress adjourned in the summer of 1866, the nation's attention remained fixed on Reconstruction. In May and July, the bloody riots in Memphis and New Orleans turned more moderates against Johnson's Reconstruction policies. Some interpreted the congressional elections that fall as a referendum on Reconstruction and the

### Fourteenth Amendment

Constitutional amendment, ratified in 1868, defining American citizenship and placing restrictions on former Confederates.

**enfranchise** To grant the right to vote to an individual or group.

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton** A founder and leader of the American woman suffrage movement from 1848 (date of the Seneca Falls Conference) until her death in 1902.

**Susan B. Anthony** Tireless campaigner for woman suffrage and close associate of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.



# It Matters Today

## THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

The Fourteenth Amendment is one of the most important sources of Americans' civil rights, next to the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments). One key provision in the Fourteenth Amendment is the definition of American citizenship. Previously, the Constitution did not address that question. The Fourteenth Amendment cleared up any confusion about who was, and who was not, a citizen.

The amendment also specifies that no state may abridge the liberties of a citizen "without due process of law." Until this time, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights restricted action by the *federal* government to restrict individual liberties. The Supreme Court has interpreted the Fourteenth Amendment to mean that the restrictions placed on the federal government by the First Amendment also limit state governments—that no *state* government may abridge freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion.

The Supreme Court continues to interpret the Fourteenth Amendment when it is presented with new cases involving state restrictions on the rights of citizens. For example, the Supreme Court cited the Fourteenth Amendment to conclude that states may not prevent residents from buying contraceptives, and cited the due process clause among other provisions of the Constitution, in *Roe v. Wade*, to conclude that state laws may not prevent women from having abortions.

- Look up the Fourteenth Amendment in the back of this book. How does the Fourteenth Amendment define citizenship? Using an online newspaper, can you find recent proposals to change the definition of American citizenship? Can you find examples of other nations that have more restrictive definitions of citizenship?
- What current political issues may lead to court cases in which the Fourteenth Amendment is likely to be invoked?

Fourteenth Amendment, pitting Johnson against the Radicals. Johnson undertook a speaking tour to promote his views, but one of his own supporters calculated that Johnson's reckless tirades alienated a million voters. Republicans swept the 1866 elections, outnumbering Democrats 143 to 49 in the new House of Representatives, and 42 to 11 in the Senate. Lyman Trumbull, senator from Illinois and a leading moderate, voiced the consensus of congressional Republicans: Congress should now "hurl from power the disloyal element" in the South.

### Radicals in Control

As congressional Radicals struggled with President Johnson over control of Reconstruction, it became clear that the Fourteenth Amendment might fall short of ratification. Rejection by ten states could prevent its acceptance. By March 1867, the amendment had been rejected by twelve states—Delaware, Kentucky, and all the former Confederate states except Tennessee. Moderate Republicans who had expected the Fourteenth Amendment to be the final Reconstruction measure now became receptive to other proposals that the Radicals put forth.

On March 2, 1867, Congress overrode Johnson's veto of the Military Reconstruction Act, which divided the Confederate states (except Tennessee) into five military districts. Each district was to be governed by a military commander authorized by Congress to use military force to protect life and property. These ten states were to hold constitutional conventions, and all adult male citizens were to vote, except former Confederates barred from office under the proposed Fourteenth Amendment. The constitutional conventions were then to create new state governments that permitted black suffrage, and the new

governments were to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Congress would then evaluate whether those state governments were ready to regain representation in Congress.

Congress had wrested a major degree of control over Reconstruction from the president, but it was not finished. Also on March 2, Congress further limited Johnson's powers. The Command of the Army Act specified that the president could issue military orders only through the General of the Army, then Ulysses S. Grant, who was considered an ally of Congress. It also specified that the General of the Army could not be removed without Senate permission. Congress thereby blocked Johnson from direct communication with military commanders in the South. The Tenure of Office Act specified that officials appointed with the Senate's consent were to remain in office until the Senate approved a successor, thereby preventing Johnson from removing federal officials who opposed his policies. Johnson understood both measures as invasions of presidential authority.

Early in 1867, some Radicals began to consider impeaching President Johnson. The Constitution (Article I, Sections 2 and 3) gives the House of Representatives exclusive power to **impeach** the president—that is, to charge the chief executive with misconduct. The Constitution specifies that the Senate shall hold trial on those charges, with the chief justice of the Supreme Court presiding. If found guilty by a two-thirds vote of the Senate, the president is removed from office.

In January 1867, the House Judiciary Committee considered charges against Johnson but found no convincing evidence of misconduct. Johnson, however, directly challenged Congress over the Tenure of Office Act by removing Edwin Stanton as secretary of war. This gave Johnson's opponents something resembling a violation of law by the president. Still, an effort to secure impeachment through the House Judiciary Committee failed. The Joint Committee on Reconstruction, led by Thaddeus Stevens, then took over and developed charges against Johnson. On February 24, 1868, the House adopted eleven articles, or charges, nearly all based on the Stanton affair. The actual reasons the Radicals wanted Johnson removed were clear to all: they disliked him and his actions.

To convict Johnson and remove him from the presidency required a two-thirds vote by the Senate. Johnson's defenders argued that he had done nothing to warrant impeachment. The Radicals' legal case was weak, but they urged senators to vote on whether they wished Johnson to remain as president. Republican unity unraveled when some moderates, fearing the precedent of removing a president for such flimsy reasons, joined with Democrats to defeat the Radicals. The vote, on May 16 and 26, 1868, was thirty-five in favor of conviction and nineteen against, one vote short of the required two-thirds. By this tiny margin, Congress endorsed the principle that it should not remove the president from office simply because members of Congress disagree with or dislike the president.

**impeach** To charge a public official with improper, usually criminal, conduct.

## Freedom and the Legacy of Slavery

- ★ **How did the freed people respond to freedom? What seem to have been the leading objectives among freed people as they explored their new opportunities?**
- ★ **How did southern whites respond to the end of slavery?**

As politicians argued in Washington, African Americans throughout the South set about creating new, free lives for themselves. In the antebellum South, all slaves and most free African Americans had led lives tightly constrained by law and custom. Blacks, previously permitted few social organizations of their own, responded to emancipation with a desire for freedom from white control, for **autonomy** as individuals and as a community.

**autonomy** Control of one's own affairs.

Before Emancipation, slaves typically made their own simple clothing or they received the used outfits of their owners and overseers. With Emancipation, those freed people who had an income could afford to dress more fashionably. The Harry Stephens family probably put on their best clothes for a visit to the photographer G. Gable in 1866. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Collection, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, 2005 (2005. 100. 277).



The prospect of autonomy touched every aspect of life—family, churches, schools, newspapers. From this ferment of freedom came new, independent black institutions that provided the basis for southern African American communities. At the same time, the economic life of the South had been shattered by the Civil War and was being transformed by emancipation. Thus white southerners also faced drastic economic and social change.

### Defining the Meaning of Freedom

At the most basic level, freedom came every time an individual slave stopped working for a master and claimed the right to be free. Freedom did not come to all slaves at the same time or in the same way. For some, freedom came before the

Emancipation Proclamation, when they crossed into Union-held territory and asserted their liberty. As civil authority continued to break down throughout much of the South, many slaves declared their freedom and left the lands they had worked when they were in bondage. Some left for good, but many remained nearby, though with a new understanding of their relationship to their former masters. For some, freedom did not come until ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Across the South, the approach of Yankee troops set off a joyous celebration—called a Jubilee—among those who knew that their enslavement was ending. As one Virginia woman remembered, “Such rejoicing and shouting you never heard in your life.” Once the celebrating was over, however, the freed people had to decide how best to use their freedom. The freed people expressed their new status in many ways. Some chose new names to symbolize their new beginning. Many freed people changed their style of dress, discarding the cheap clothing provided to slaves. A significant benefit of freedom was the ability to travel without a pass and without being checked by the **patrollers** who had enforced the **pass system**.

The towns and cities of the South attracted freed people looking for work. The presence of Union troops and federal officials promised protection from the random violence

**patrollers** During the era of slavery, white guards who made the rounds of rural roads to make certain that slaves were not moving about the countryside without written permission from their masters.

**pass system** Laws that forbade slaves from traveling without written authorization from their owners.

against freed people that occurred in many rural areas. In March 1865, Congress created the **Freedmen's Bureau** to assist the freed people in finding work and necessities in their transition to freedom. Black churches, newly established schools, and other social institutions, some begun by free blacks before the war, also emerged in cities and towns. Little housing was available, however, so freed people often crowded into hastily built shanties. Sanitation was poor and disease a common scourge.

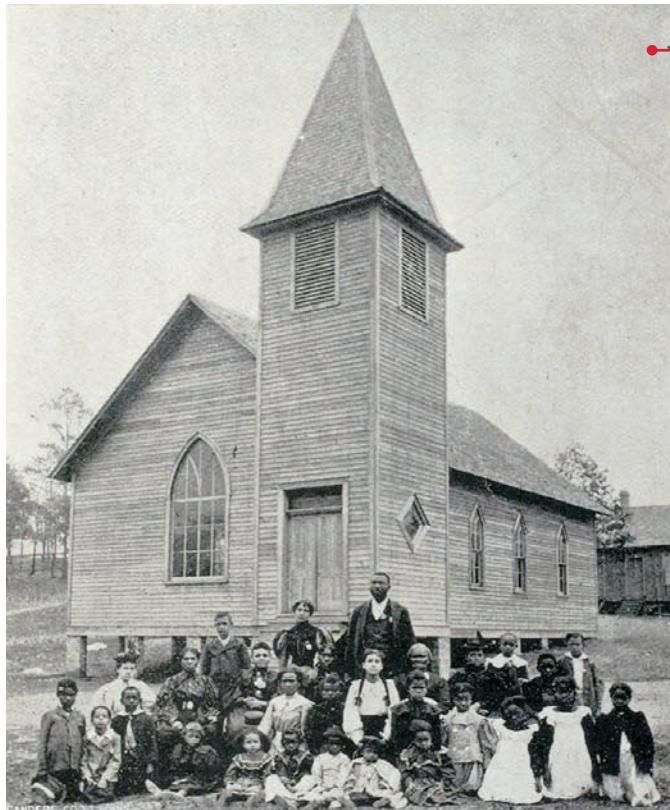
### Creating Communities

During Reconstruction, African Americans created their own communities with their own social institutions, beginning with family ties. Joyful families were sometimes reunited after years of separation caused by the sale of a spouse or children. Some people spent years searching for lost family members.

The new freedom to conduct religious services without white supervision was especially important. Churches quickly became the most prominent social organizations in African American communities. Churches were, in fact, among the very first social institutions that African Americans fully controlled. During Reconstruction, black denominations, including the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and several Baptist groups, grew rapidly in the South. Black ministers often became key leaders within developing African American communities.

Throughout the cities and towns of the South, African Americans—especially ministers and church members—worked to create schools. Setting up a school, said one, was “the first proof” of independence. Many new schools were for both children and adults,

**Freedmen's Bureau** Agency established in 1865 to aid former slaves in their transition to freedom, especially by administering relief and sponsoring education.



Churches were the first institutions in America to be completely controlled by African Americans, and ministers were highly influential figures in the African American communities that emerged during Reconstruction, both in towns and in rural areas. This photograph of the Colored Methodist Episcopal mission church in Hot Springs, Arkansas, was first published in 1898 in *The History of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America* by Charles H. Phillips, a bishop of that denomination. Schomburg Center/Art Resource, NY.

whose literacy and learning had been restricted by state laws prohibiting education for slaves. When African Americans set up schools, they faced severe shortages of teachers, books, and schoolrooms—everything but students.

The Freedmen's Bureau played an important role in organizing and equipping schools. Freedmen's Aid Societies also sprang up in most northern cities and, along with northern churches, collected funds and supplies for the freed people. Teachers—mostly white women, often from New England, and often acting on religious impulses—came from the North. By 1870, the Freedmen's Bureau supervised more than four thousand schools, with more than nine thousand teachers and 247,000 students. Still, in 1870, only one-tenth of school-age black children were in school.

African Americans created other social institutions, in addition to churches and schools, including **fraternal orders**, **benevolent societies**, and newspapers. By 1866, the South had ten black newspapers, led by the *New Orleans Tribune*, and black newspapers played important roles in shaping African American communities.

In politics, African Americans' first objective was recognition of their equal rights as citizens. Frederick Douglass insisted, "Slavery is not abolished until the black man has the ballot." Political conventions of African Americans attracted hundreds of leaders of the emerging black communities. They called for equality and voting rights and pointed to black contributions in the American Revolution and the Civil War as evidence of patriotism and devotion. They also appealed to the nation's republican traditions, in particular the Declaration of Independence and its dictum that "all men are created equal."

### Land and Labor

Former slave owners reacted to emancipation in many ways. Some tried to keep their slaves from learning of their freedom. Few former slave owners provided any compensation to assist their former slaves. One freedman later recalled, "I do know some of dem old slave owners to be nice enough to start der slaves off in freedom wid somethin' to live on . . . but dey wasn't in droves, I tell you."

Many freed people looked to Union troops for assistance. When General William T. Sherman led his victorious army through Georgia in the closing months of the war, thousands of African American men, women, and children claimed their freedom and followed in the Yankees' wake. Their leaders told Sherman that what they wanted most was to "reap the fruit of our own labor." In January 1865, Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, setting aside the Sea Islands and land along the South Carolina coast for freed families. Each family was to receive 40 acres and the loan of an army mule, a policy that gave rise to the rallying cry of "forty acres and a mule." By June, the area had filled with forty thousand freed people settled on 400,000 acres of "Sherman land."

By the end of the war, the Freedmen's Bureau controlled some 850,000 acres of land abandoned by former owners or confiscated from Confederate leaders. In July 1865, General Oliver O. Howard, head of the bureau, directed that this land be divided into 40-acre plots to be given to freed people. However, President Johnson ordered Howard to halt **land redistribution** and to reclaim land already handed over and return it to its former owners. Johnson's order displaced thousands of African Americans who had already taken their 40 acres. They and others who had hoped for land felt disappointed and betrayed. One later recalled that they had expected "a heap from freedom dey didn't git."

**Sharecropping** slowly emerged across much of the South as an alternative both to land redistribution and to wage labor on the plantations. Sharecropping derived directly from the central realities of southern agriculture. Much of the land was in large holdings,

**fraternal order** An organization of men, often with a ceremonial initiation, that typically provide rudimentary life insurance; many fraternal orders also had auxiliaries for the female relatives of members.

**benevolent society** An organization of people dedicated to some charitable purpose.

**land redistribution** The division of land held by large landowners into smaller plots that are turned over to people without property.

**sharecropping** A system for renting farmland in which tenant farmers give landlords a share of their crops, rather than cash, as rent.

# Investigating America

## Jourdan Anderson's Proposition, 1865

This letter appeared in the *New York Daily Tribune* on August 22, 1865, with the notation that it was a "genuine document," reprinted from the *Cincinnati Commercial*. At that time, all newspapers had strong connections to political parties, and both of these papers were allied to the Republicans. By then, battle lines were being drawn between President Andrew Johnson and Republicans in Congress over the legal and political status of the freed people.

DAYTON, Ohio, August 7, 1865

To my Old Master, Col. P. H. Anderson, Big Spring,  
Tennessee

Sir: I got your letter and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jordan, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can . . .

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here; I get \$25 a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy (the folks here call her Mrs. Anderson), and the children, Milly[,] Jane and Grundy, go to school and are learning well. . . Now, if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free-papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department at Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you are sincerely disposed to treat us justly and kindly—and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time we served you. This will make us forget and forgive old sores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years, at \$25 a month for me and \$2 a week for Mandy. Our earnings would amount to

\$11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages has been kept back and deduct what you paid for our clothing and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. . . If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. . .

In answering this letter please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up and both good looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve and die if it had to come to that than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood, the great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

From your old servant, JOURDAN ANDERSON

- How does the author indicate that the lives of these freed people have changed by leaving Tennessee for Ohio?
- Anderson's monthly wages of \$25 in 1865 would be equivalent to about \$335 today. The amount he asks for as compensation for his slave labor, \$11,680 in 1865, would be equivalent to more than \$150,000 today. How does the author use this letter to raise a wide range of issues about the nature of slavery and about the uneasiness of freed people about life in the South in 1865? Evaluate the likelihood that this letter was actually written by a former slave. What are the other possibilities? Why do you think this letter appeared in newspapers in August of 1865?



See our interactive eBook for map and primary source activities.

**capital** Money, especially the money invested in a commercial enterprise.

but the landowners had no one to work it. **Capital** was scarce. Many whites with large landholdings lacked the cash to hire farm workers. Many families, both black and white, wanted to raise their own crops with their own labor but had no land, no supplies, and no money. Under sharecropping, an individual—usually a family head—signed a contract with a landowner to rent land as home and farm. The tenant—the sharecropper—was to pay, as rent, a share of the harvest. The share might amount to half or more of the crop if the landlord provided mules, tools, seed, and fertilizer as well as land. Many landowners thought that sharecropping encouraged tenants to be productive, to get as much value as possible from their shares of the crop. The rental contract often allowed the landlord to specify what crop would be planted, and most landlords chose cotton so that their tenants would not hold back any of the harvest for personal consumption. Sharecropping may have increased the dependency of the South on cotton.

Southern farmers—black or white, sharecroppers or owners of small plots—often found themselves in debt to a local merchant who advanced supplies on credit. In return for credit, the merchant required a lien (a legal claim) on the growing crop. Many landlords ran stores that they required their tenants to patronize. Often the share paid as rent and the debt owed the store exceeded the value of the entire harvest. Furthermore, many rental contracts and **crop liens** were automatically renewed if all debts were not paid at the end of a year. In spite of their efforts to achieve greater control over their lives and labor, many southern farm families, black and white alike, found themselves trapped by sharecropping and debt. Still, sharecropping gave freed people more control over their daily lives than had slavery.

Landlords could exercise political as well as economic power over their tenants. Until the 1890s, casting a ballot on election day was an open process, and any observer could see how an individual voted. Thus, when a landlord or merchant advocated a particular candidate, the unspoken message was often an implicit threat to cut off credit at the store or to evict a sharecropper if he did not vote accordingly. Such forms of economic **coercion** had the potential to undercut voting rights.

**coercion** Use of threats or force to compel action.

### Political Terrorism and the Election of 1868

The Radicals' failure to unseat Johnson left him with less than a year remaining in office. As the election approached, the Republicans nominated Ulysses S. Grant for president.

A war hero, popular throughout the North, Grant had fully supported Lincoln and Congress in implementing emancipation. By 1868, he had committed himself to the congressional view of Reconstruction. The Democrats nominated Horatio Seymour, a former governor of New York, and focused their efforts on denouncing Reconstruction.

In the South, the campaign stirred up fierce activity by the Ku Klux Klan and similar groups. **Terrorists** assassinated an Arkansas congressman, three members of the South Carolina legislature, and several other Republican leaders. Throughout the South, mobs attacked Republican offices and meetings, and sometimes attacked any black person they could find. Such coercion had its intended effect at the ballot box. For example, as many as two hundred blacks were killed in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana, where the Republicans previously had a thousand-vote majority. On election day, not a single Republican vote was recorded from that parish.

Despite such violence, many Americans may have been anticipating a calmer political future. In June 1868, Congress had readmitted seven southern states that met the requirements of congressional Reconstruction. In July, the secretary of state declared the Fourteenth Amendment ratified. In November, Grant easily won the presidency, carrying twenty-six of the thirty-four states and 53 percent of the vote.

**terrorists** Those who use threats and violence to achieve ideological or political goals.

### Voting Rights and Civil Rights

With Grant in the White House, Radical Republicans now moved to secure voting rights for all African Americans. In 1867 Congress had removed racial barriers to voting in the District of Columbia and in the territories, but elsewhere the states still

defined voting rights. Congress had required southern states to enfranchise black males as the price of readmission to the Union, but only seven northern states had taken that step by 1869. Further, any state that had enfranchised African Americans could change its law at any time. In addition to the principled arguments of Douglass and other Radicals, many Republicans concluded that they needed to guarantee black suffrage in the South if they were to continue to win presidential elections and enjoy majorities in Congress.

To secure suffrage rights for all African Americans, Congress approved the **Fifteenth Amendment** in February 1869. This amendment, widely considered to be the final step in Reconstruction, prohibited both federal and state governments from restricting a person's right to vote because of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Like the Fourteenth Amendment, the Fifteenth marked a compromise between moderates and Radicals. Some African American leaders argued for language guaranteeing voting rights to all male citizens, because prohibiting some grounds for **disfranchisement** might imply the legitimacy of other grounds. Some Radicals tried, unsuccessfully, to add "nativity, property, education, or religious beliefs" to the prohibited grounds. Democrats condemned the Fifteenth Amendment as a "revolutionary" attack on states' authority to define voting rights.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and other advocates of woman suffrage opposed the amendment because it ignored restrictions based on sex. For nearly twenty years, the cause of women's rights and the cause of black rights had marched together. Once black male suffrage came under discussion, however, this alliance began to fracture. When one veteran abolitionist declared it to be "the Negro's hour" and called for black male suffrage, Anthony responded that she "would sooner cut off my right hand than ask the ballot for the black man and not for woman." The break between the women's movement and the black movement was eventually papered over, but the wounds never completely healed.

The Fifteenth Amendment did nothing to reduce the violence—especially at election time—that had become almost routine in the South after 1865. When Klan activity escalated in the elections of 1870, southern Republicans looked to Washington for support. In 1870 and 1871, Congress adopted several Enforcement Acts—often called the Ku Klux Klan Acts—to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Despite a limited budget and many obstacles, the prosecution of Klansmen began in 1871. Across the South many hundreds were indicted, and many were convicted. In South Carolina, President Grant declared martial law. By 1872, federal intervention had broken much of the strength of the Klan. (The Klan that appeared in the 1920s was a new organization that borrowed the regalia and tactics of the earlier organization.)

## Black Reconstruction

★ **What major groups made up the Republican Party in the South during Reconstruction? Compare their reasons for being Republicans, their relative size, and their objectives.**

★ **What were the most lasting results of the Republican state administrations?**

Congressional Reconstruction set the stage for new developments at state and local levels throughout the South, as newly enfranchised black men organized for political action. African Americans never completely controlled any state government, but they did form a significant element in the governments of several states. The period when African Americans participated

### Fifteenth Amendment

Constitutional amendment, ratified in 1870, that prohibited states from denying a person the right to vote because of race or because the person had been a slave.

**disfranchisement** The taking away of an individual's or group's right to vote.

**nativity** Place of birth.

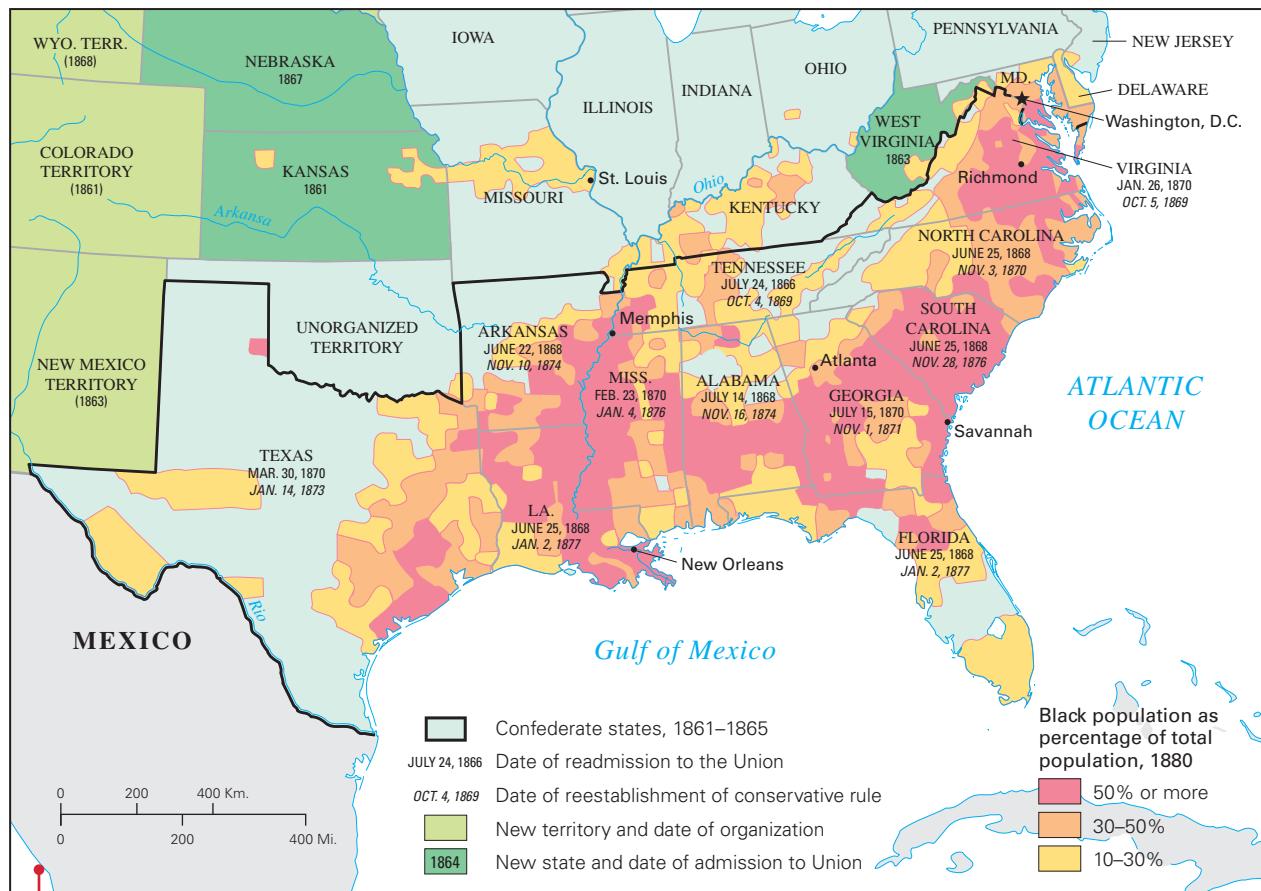
**Black Reconstruction** The period of Reconstruction when African Americans took an active role in state and local government.

prominently in state and local politics is usually called **Black Reconstruction**. It began with efforts by African Americans to take part in politics as early as 1865 and lasted for more than a decade. A few African Americans continued to hold elective office in the South long after 1877, but by then they could do little to bring about significant political change. Map 15.1 indicates the proportion of African Americans in each of the southern states, and also the years when each state was under a Reconstruction state government.

### The Republican Party in the South

Not surprisingly, African Americans who participated actively in politics did so as Republicans, and they formed the large majority of those who supported the Republican Party in the South. Nearly all black Republicans were new to politics, and

they often braved considerable personal danger by participating in a party that many white southerners equated with the conquering Yankees. In the South, the Republican Party also included some southern whites along with a smaller number of transplanted northerners—both black and white.



**MAP 15.1** African American Population and the Duration of Reconstruction

This map shows the proportion of African Americans in the South, and also includes the dates when each of the former Confederate states was under a Reconstruction state government. Does the map suggest any relationship between the proportion of a state's population that was African American and the amount of time that the state spent under a Reconstruction state government?

Suffrage made politics a centrally important activity for African American communities. The state constitutional conventions that met in 1868 included 265 black delegates. Only in Louisiana and South Carolina were half or more of the delegates black. With suffrage established, southern Republicans began to elect African Americans to public office. Between 1869 and 1877, fourteen black men served in the national House of Representatives, and Mississippi sent two African Americans to the U.S. Senate: Hiram R. Revels and Blanche K. Bruce.

Across the South, six African Americans served as lieutenant governors, and one of them, P. B. S. Pinchback, succeeded to the governorship of Louisiana for forty-three days. More than six hundred black men served in southern state legislatures during Reconstruction, but only in South Carolina did African Americans have a majority in the state legislature. Elsewhere they formed part of a Republican majority but rarely held key legislative positions. Only in South Carolina and Mississippi did legislatures elect black presiding officers.

Although politically inexperienced, most African Americans who held office during Reconstruction had some education. Of the eighteen who served in statewide offices, all but three are known to have been born free. P. B. S. Pinchback, for example, was educated in Ohio and served in the army as a captain before entering politics in Louisiana. Most black politicians first achieved prominence through service with the army, the Freedmen's Bureau, the new schools, or the religious and civic organizations of black communities.

Southern Democrats applied the term **carpetbagger** to northern Republicans who came to the South after the war, regarding them as second-rate schemers—outsiders with their belongings packed in a cheap carpet bag. In fact, most northerners who came south were well-educated men and women from middle-class backgrounds. Most men had served in the Union army and moved south before blacks could vote. Some were lawyers, businessmen, and newspaper editors. Whether as teachers in the new schools or as agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, most hoped to transform the South by creating new institutions based on northern models, especially free labor and free public schools. Although few in number, transplanted northerners nonetheless took leading roles in state constitutional conventions and state legislatures. Some were also prominent advocates of economic modernization.

Southern Democrats reserved their greatest contempt for those they called **scalawags**, slang for someone completely unscrupulous and worthless. Scalawags were white southerners who became Republicans. They included many southern Unionists, who had opposed secession, and others who thought the Republicans offered the best hope for economic recovery. Scalawags included merchants, artisans, and professionals who favored a modernized South. Others were small-scale farmers who saw Reconstruction as a way to end political domination by the plantation owners.

The freedmen, carpetbaggers, and scalawags who made up the Republican Party in the South hoped to inject new ideas into that region. They tried to modernize state and local governments and make the postwar South more like the North. They repealed outdated laws and established or expanded schools, hospitals, orphanages, and penitentiaries.

### Creating an Educational System and Fighting Discrimination

Free public education was perhaps the most permanent legacy of Black Reconstruction. Reconstruction constitutions throughout the South required tax-supported public schools. Implementation, however, was expensive and proceeded slowly. By the mid-1870s, only half of southern children attended public schools.

**carpetbagger** Derogatory term for the northerners who came to the South after the Civil War to take part in Reconstruction.

**scalawag** Derogatory term for white southerners who aligned themselves with the Republican Party during Reconstruction.

In creating public schools, Reconstruction state governments faced a central question: would white and black children attend the same schools? Many African Americans favored racially integrated schools. On the other hand, southern white leaders, including many southern white Republicans, argued that integration would destroy the fledgling public school system by driving whites away. In consequence, no state required school integration. Similarly, southern states set up separate black normal schools (to train schoolteachers) and colleges.

On balance, most blacks probably agreed with Frederick Douglass that separate schools were “infinitely superior” to no public education at all. Some found other reasons to accept segregated schools—separate black schools gave a larger role to black parents, and they hired black teachers.

Funding for the new schools was rarely adequate. Creating and operating two educational systems, one white and one black, was costly. The division of limited funds posed an additional problem, and black schools almost always received fewer dollars per student than white schools. Despite their accomplishments, the segregated schools institutionalized discrimination.

Reconstruction state governments moved toward protection of equal rights in areas other than education. As Republicans gained control in the South, they often wrote into the new state constitutions prohibitions against discrimination and protections for civil rights. Some Reconstruction state governments enacted laws guaranteeing **equal access** to public transportation and public accommodations. Elsewhere efforts to pass equal access laws foundered on the opposition of southern white Republicans, who often joined Democrats to favor **segregation**. Such conflicts pointed up the internal divisions within the southern Republican Party. Even when equal access laws were passed, they were often not enforced.

**equal access** The right of any person to a public facility, such as streetcars, as freely as any other person.

**segregation** Separation on account of race or class from the rest of society, such as the separation of blacks from whites in most southern school systems.

## The End of Reconstruction

- ★ **What major factors brought about the end of Reconstruction? Evaluate their relative significance.**
- ★ **Many historians began to reevaluate their understanding of Reconstruction during the 1950s and 1960s. Why do you suppose that happened?**

From the beginning, most white southerners resisted the new order that the conquering Yankees imposed on them. Initially, resistance took the form of black codes and the Klan. Later, some southern opponents of Reconstruction developed new strategies, but terror remained an important instrument of resistance.

### The “New Departure”

**New Departure** Strategy of cooperation with some Reconstruction measures adopted by some leading southern Democrats in the hope of winning compromises favorable to their party.

By 1869, some leading southern Democrats had abandoned their last-ditch resistance to change, deciding instead to accept some Reconstruction measures and African American suffrage. At the same time, they also tried to secure restoration of political rights for former Confederates. Behind this **New Departure** for southern Democrats lay the belief that continued resistance would only cause more regional turmoil and prolong federal intervention.

Sometimes southern Democrats supported conservative Republicans for state and local offices instead of members of their own party, hoping to defuse concern in Washington and dilute Radical influence in state government. This strategy was tried first in Virginia, the last southern state to hold an election under its new constitution. There

William Mahone, a former Confederate general, railroad promoter, and leading Democrat, forged a broad political **coalition** that accepted black suffrage. In 1869 Mahone's organization elected as governor a northern-born banker and moderate Republican. In this way, Mahone got state support for his railroad plans, and Virginia successfully avoided Radical Republican rule.

Coalitions of Democrats and moderate Republicans won in Tennessee in 1869 and in Missouri in 1870. Elsewhere, leading Democrats endorsed the New Departure and accepted black suffrage but attacked Republicans for raising taxes and increasing state spending. And Democrats usually charged Republicans with corruption. Such campaigns brought a positive response from many taxpayers because southern tax rates had risen significantly to support the new educational systems, railroad subsidies, and other modernizing programs. In 1870 Democrats won the governorship in Alabama and Georgia. For Georgia, it meant the end of Reconstruction.

The victories of so-called **Redeemers** and New Departure Democrats in the early 1870s coincided with renewed terrorist activity aimed at Republicans. The worst single incident occurred in 1873. A group of armed freedmen fortified the town of Colfax, Louisiana, to hold off Democrats who were planning to seize the county government. After a three-week siege, well-armed whites overcame the black defenders and killed 280 African Americans. Leading Democrats rarely endorsed such bloodshed, but they reaped political advantages from it.

### The 1872 Presidential Election

The New Departure movement, at its peak in 1872, coincided with a division within the Republican Party in the North. The Liberal Republican movement grew out of several elements within the Republican Party. Some were moderates, concerned that the Radicals had gone too far, especially with the Enforcement Acts, and had endangered federalism. Others opposed Grant on issues unrelated to Reconstruction. All were appalled by growing evidence of corruption in the Grant administration. Liberal Republicans found allies among Democrats by arguing against further Reconstruction measures.

Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*, won the Liberal nomination for president. Greeley, an opponent of slavery before the Civil War, had given strong support to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. But he had sometimes taken puzzling positions, including a willingness to let the South secede. One political observer described him as "honest, but . . . conceited, fussy, and foolish."

Greeley had long attacked the Democrats in his newspaper columns. Even so, the Democrats nominated him in an effort to defeat Grant. Many saw the Democrats' action as desperate opportunism, and Greeley alienated many northern Democrats by favoring restrictions on the sale of alcohol. Grant won convincingly, carrying 56 percent of the vote and winning every northern state and ten of the sixteen southern and border states.

### The Politics of Terror: The "Mississippi Plan"

By the time of the 1872 presidential race, nearly all southern whites had abandoned the Republicans, and Black Reconstruction had ended in several states. African Americans, however, maintained their Republican loyalties. As Democrats worked to unite all southern whites behind their banner of white supremacy, the South polarized politically along racial lines. Elections in 1874 proved disastrous for Republicans: Democrats won more than two-thirds of the South's seats in the House of Representatives and "redeemed" Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas.

**coalition** An alliance, especially a temporary one of different people or groups.

**Redeemers** Southern Democrats who hoped to bring the Democratic Party back into power and to suppress Black Reconstruction.

Terrorism against black Republicans and their remaining white allies played a role in some victories by Democrats in 1874. Where the Klan had worn disguises and ridden at night, by 1874, Democrats in many places openly formed rifle companies, put on red-flannel shirts, and marched and drilled in public. In some areas, armed whites prevented African Americans from voting or terrorized prominent Republicans, especially African American Republicans.

**Mississippi Plan** Use of threats, violence, and lynching by Mississippi Democrats in 1875 to intimidate Republicans and bring the Democratic Party to power.

**Rutherford B. Hayes** Ohio governor and former Union general who won the Republican nomination in 1876 and became president of the United States in 1877.

**voting fraud** Altering election results by illegal measures to bring about the victory of a particular candidate.

**Compromise of 1877** Name applied by historians to the resolution of the disputed presidential election of 1876; it gave the presidency to the Republicans and made concessions to southern Democrats.

During 1875 in Mississippi, political violence reached such levels that the use of terror to overthrow Reconstruction became known as the **Mississippi Plan**. Democratic rifle clubs broke up Republican meetings and attacked Republican leaders in broad daylight. One black Mississippian described the election of 1875 as “the most violent time we have ever seen.”

### The Compromise of 1877

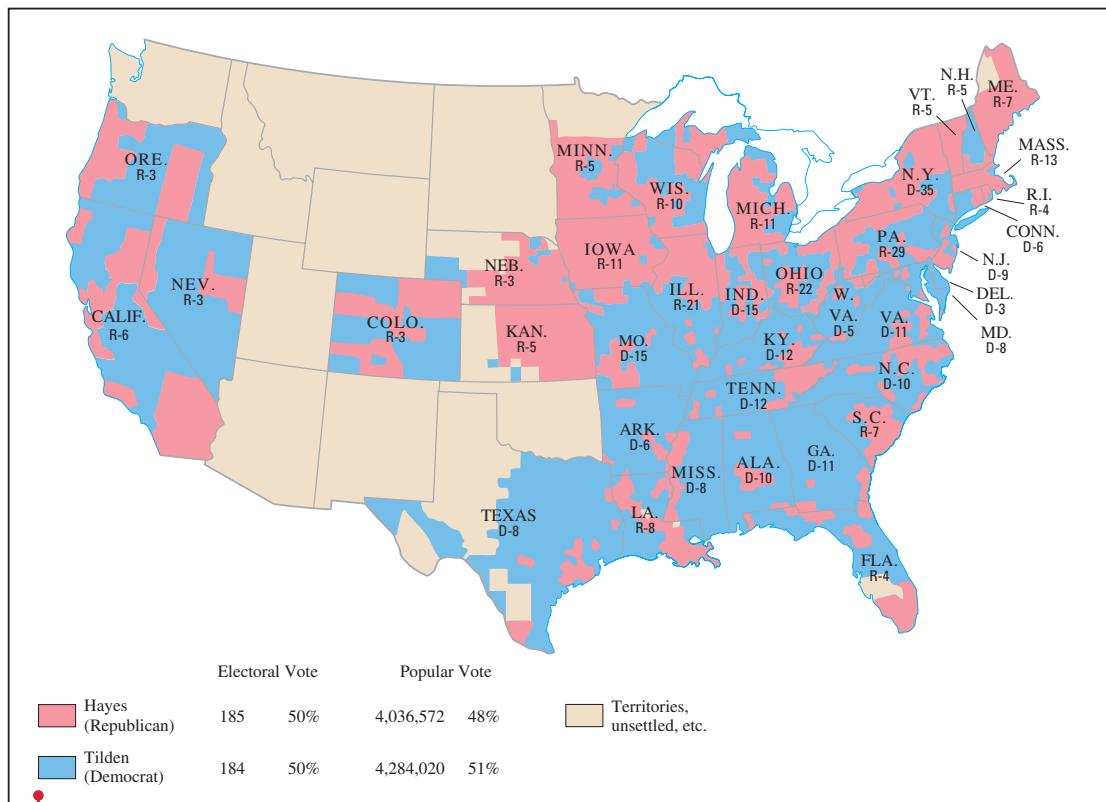
In 1876, on the centennial of American independence, the nation stumbled through a deeply troubled—and potentially dangerous—presidential election. As revelations of corruption in the Grant administration multiplied (discussed in the next chapter), both parties sought candidates known for their integrity. The Democratic Party nominated Samuel J. Tilden, governor of New York, as its presidential candidate. Tilden, a wealthy lawyer and businessman, had earned a reputation as a reformer by fighting political corruption in New York City. The Republicans selected **Rutherford B. Hayes**, a Civil War general and governor of Ohio, whose unblemished reputation proved to be his greatest asset. During the campaign in the South, intimidation of Republicans, both black and white, continued in many places.

First election reports indicated a victory for Tilden (see Map 15.2). In addition to the border states and the South, he also carried New York, New Jersey, and Indiana. Tilden received 51 percent of the popular vote versus 48 percent for Hayes.

Leading Republicans quickly realized that their party still controlled the counting and reporting of ballots in South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana, and that those three states could change the Electoral College majority from Tilden to Hayes. Charging **voting fraud**, Republican election boards in those states rejected enough ballots so that the official count gave Hayes narrow majorities and thus a one-vote margin of victory in the Electoral College. Crying fraud in return, Democratic officials in all three states submitted their own versions of the vote count. Angry Democrats vowed to see Tilden inaugurated, by force if necessary. Some Democratic newspapers ran headlines that read “Tilden or War.”

For the first time, Congress faced the problem of disputed electoral votes that could decide the outcome of an election. To resolve the challenges, Congress created a commission: five senators, chosen by the Senate, which had a Republican majority; five representatives, chosen by the House, which had a Democratic majority; and five Supreme Court justices, chosen by the justices. Initially, the balance was seven Republicans, seven Democrats, and one independent from the Supreme Court. The independent withdrew, however, and the remaining justices (all but one of whom had been appointed by Republican presidents) chose a Republican to replace him. The Republicans now had a one-vote majority on the commission.

This body needed to make its decision before the constitutionally mandated deadline of March 4. Some Democrats and Republicans worried over the potential for violence. However, as commission hearings droned on through January and into February 1877, informal discussions took place among leading Republicans and Democrats. The result has often been called the **Compromise of 1877**.



**MAP 15.2** Election of 1876

The end of Black Reconstruction in most of the South combined with Democratic gains in the North to give a popular majority to Tilden, the Democratic candidate. The electoral vote was disputed, however, and was ultimately resolved in favor of Hayes, the Republican.

Southern Democrats demanded an end to federal intervention in southern politics but insisted on federal subsidies for railroad construction and waterways in the South. And they wanted one of their own as postmaster general because that office held the key to most federal patronage. In return, southern Democrats seemed willing to abandon Tilden's claim to the White House.

Although the Compromise of 1877 was never set down in one place or agreed to by all parties, most of its conditions were met. By a straight party vote, the commission confirmed the election of Hayes. Soon after his peaceful inauguration, the new president ordered the last of the federal troops withdrawn from occupation duties in the South. The Radical era of a powerful federal government pledged to protect "equality before the law" for all citizens was over. The last three Republican state governments fell in 1877. The Democrats, the self-described party of white supremacy, now held sway in every southern state. In parts of the South thereafter, election fraud and violence became routine. One Mississippi judge acknowledged in 1890 that since 1875, "we have been preserving the ascendancy of the white people" through "fraud and violence."

The Compromise of 1877 marked the end of Reconstruction. The Civil War was more than ten years in the past. Many moderate Republicans had hoped that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the Civil Rights Act would guarantee black rights

without a continuing federal presence in the South. Southern Democrats tried hard to persuade northerners—on paltry evidence—that carpetbaggers and scalawags were all corrupt and self-serving, that they manipulated black voters to keep themselves in power, that African American officeholders were ignorant and illiterate and could not participate in politics without guidance by whites, and that southern Democrats wanted only to establish honest self-government. The truth of the situation made little difference.

Some Republicans, to be certain, kept the faith of their abolitionist and Radical forebears and hoped the federal government might again protect black rights. After 1877, however, Republicans routinely condemned violations of black rights, and few Republicans showed much interest in using federal power to prevent such outrages.

### After Reconstruction

Southern Democrats read the events of 1877 as permission to establish new systems of politics and race relations. Most Redeemers worked to reduce taxes, dismantle Reconstruction legislation and agencies, and grab political influence away from black citizens. They also began the process of turning the South into a one-party region, a situation that reached its fullest development around 1900 and persisted until the 1950s and, in some areas, even later.

Voting and officeholding by African Americans did not cease in 1877, but the context changed profoundly. Without federal enforcement of black rights, the threat of violence and the potential for economic retaliation by landlords and merchants sharply reduced meaningful political involvement by African Americans. Black political leaders soon understood that efforts to mobilize black voters posed dangers to candidates and voters, and they concluded that their political survival depended on favors from influential white Republicans or even from Democratic leaders. The public schools survived, segregated and underfunded, but presenting an important opportunity. Many Reconstruction-era laws remained on the books. Through much of the 1880s, many theaters, bars, restaurants, hotels, streetcars, and railroads continued to serve African Americans without discrimination.

Not until the 1890s did black disfranchisement and thoroughgoing racial segregation become widely embedded in southern law. African Americans continued to exercise some constitutional rights. White supremacy had been established by force of arms, however, and blacks exercised their rights at the sufferance of the dominant whites. Such a situation bore the seeds of future conflict.

After 1877, Reconstruction was held up as a failure. Although far from accurate, the southern whites' version of Reconstruction—that conniving carpetbaggers and scalawags had manipulated ignorant freedmen—appealed to many white Americans throughout the nation, and it gained widespread acceptance among many novelists, journalists, and historians. William A. Dunning, for example, endorsed that interpretation in his history of Reconstruction, published in 1907. Thomas Dixon's popular novel *The Clansman* (1905) inspired the highly influential film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Historically inaccurate and luridly racist, the book and the movie portrayed Ku Klux Klan members as heroes who rescued the white South, and especially white southern women, from domination and debauchery at the hands of depraved freedmen and carpetbaggers.

Against this pattern stood some of the first black historians. George Washington Williams, a Union army veteran, published a two-volume history of African Americans

in 1882. *Black Reconstruction in America*, by W. E. B. Du Bois, appeared in 1935. Both presented fully the role of African Americans in Reconstruction and the accomplishments of the Reconstruction state governments and black leaders. Historians today recognize that Reconstruction was not the failure that had earlier been claimed. The creation of public schools was the most important of the changes in southern life produced by the Reconstruction state governments. At a federal level, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments eventually provided the constitutional leverage to restore the principle of equality before the law that so concerned the Radicals. Historians also recognize that Reconstruction collapsed partly because of internal flaws, partly because of divisions within the Republican Party, and partly because of the political terrorism unleashed in the South and the North's refusal to commit the force required to protect the constitutional rights of African Americans.

## Summary

At the end of the Civil War, the nation faced difficult choices regarding the restoration of the defeated South and the future of the freed people. Committed to ending slavery, President Lincoln nevertheless chose a lenient approach to restoring states to the Union, partly to persuade southerners to abandon the Confederacy and accept emancipation.

The end of slavery brought new opportunities for African Americans, whether or not they had been slaves. Taking advantage of the opportunities that freedom opened, they tried to create independent lives for themselves, and they developed social institutions that helped to define black communities. Because few were able to acquire land of their own, most became either sharecroppers or wage laborers. White southerners also experienced economic dislocation, and many also became sharecroppers. Most white southerners expected to keep African Americans in a subordinate role and initially used Black Codes and violence toward that end.

In reaction against the black codes and violence, Congress took control of Reconstruction away from President Johnson and passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. An attempt to remove Johnson from the presidency

was unsuccessful. Additional federal Reconstruction measures included the Fifteenth Amendment and laws against the Ku Klux Klan. Several of these measures strengthened the federal government at the expense of the states.

Enfranchised freedmen, white and black northerners who moved to the South, and some southern whites created a southern Republican Party that governed most southern states for a time. The most lasting contribution of these state governments was the creation of public school systems.

In the late 1860s, many southern Democrats chose a "New Departure": they grudgingly accepted some features of Reconstruction and sought to recapture control of state governments. By the mid-1870s, however, southern politics turned almost solely on race. The 1876 presidential election was very close and hotly disputed. Key Republicans and Democrats developed a compromise: Hayes took office and ended the final stages of Reconstruction. Without federal protection for their civil rights, African Americans faced terrorism, violence, and even death if they challenged their subordinate role. With the end of Reconstruction, the South entered an era of white supremacy in politics and government, the economy, and social relations.

## Key Terms

- freed people, *p. 352*  
emancipation, *p. 352*  
secede, *p. 352*  
abolitionists, *p. 353*  
Radical Republicans, *p. 354*  
racial integration, *p. 354*  
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# Suggested Readings

## CHAPTER 1

### Making a "New" World, to 1588

Marvin B. Becker. *Civility and Society in Western Europe, 1300–1600* (1988).

A brief but comprehensive look at social conditions in Europe during the period leading up to and out of the exploration of the New World.

Alfred W. Crosby. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (1972).

The landmark book that brought the Columbian impact into focus for the first time. Parts of the book are technical, but the explanations are clear and exciting.

Alvin M. Josephy. *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples before the Arrival of Columbus* (1992).

An overview of American civilizations prior to Columbus's and subsequent European intrusions. Nicely written, comprehensive, and engaging.

Roland Oliver and J. D. Fage. *A Short History of Africa* (1988).

The most concise and understandably written comprehensive history of Africa available.

## CHAPTER 2

### A Continent on the Move, 1400–1725

Peter N. Moogk. *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada—A Cultural History* (2000).

An excellent overview of French activities in Canada during the colonial era.

Oliver A. Rink. *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (1986).

A comprehensive overview of Dutch colonial activities in New Netherland with an emphasis on both the activities of the Dutch West India Company and private traders in creating the culture of Dutch New York.

Daniel H. Usner, Jr. *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (1992).

A highly acclaimed study of the complex world of colonial Louisiana.

David Weber. *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (1992).

A broad synthesis of the history of New Spain by the foremost scholar in the field.

## CHAPTER 3

### Founding the English Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, 1585–1732

Philip Barbour. *Pocahontas and Her World* (1970).

A factual account of the life of an American Indian princess celebrated in folklore.

David Cressy. *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (1987).

An excellent introduction to the transatlantic community of England and the colonial world.

John Demos. *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (1970).

A beautifully written and very engaging portrait of family and community life in Plymouth Plantations.

James Horn. *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (1996).

An examination of the mix of traditional and innovative characteristics of this early colonial society.

Mary Beth Norton. *In the Devil's Snare* (2003).

This book places the events of 1692 in the context of European imperial rivalries, especially the intense struggles between England and France for control of North America.

## CHAPTER 4

### The English Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, 1689–1763

Bernard Bailyn. *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (1986).

A survey of the character of, and motives for, emigration from the British Isles to America during the eighteenth century.

Ira Berlin. *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (2004).

An examination of the variety and complexities of slavery as an experience and as a legal and economic institution.

Patricia Bonomi. *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (1986).

Bonomi examines the role of religion in colonial society, with special emphasis on the Great Awakening.

Richard Hofstadter. *America at 1750: A Social Portrait* (1971).

This highly accessible work includes chapters on indentured servitude, the slave trade, the middle-class world of the colonies, the Great Awakening, and population growth and immigration pattern.

Jane T. Merritt. *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (2003).

Merritt takes a close look at the interaction between Indians and colonists in the backcountry of Pennsylvania and narrates the growing tensions between settlers and Native Americans.

Betty Wood. *The Origins of American Slavery* (1998).

This is a brief but excellent look at the use of enslaved labor in the West Indies and in the English mainland colonies and at the laws that arose to institutionalize slavery.

**CHAPTER 5****Deciding Where Loyalties Lie, 1763–1776**

Carol Berkin. *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (2005).

This book recounts the role of colonial women—European, African American, and Indian—in the years before and during the American Revolution.

Colin G. Calloway. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (1995).

A well-written account of the variety of Indian experiences during the American revolutionary era.

Edward Countryman. *The American Revolution* (1985).

An excellent narrative of the causes and consequences of the Revolutionary War.

David Hackett Fischer. *Paul Revere's Ride* (1994).

This lively account details the circumstances and background of the efforts to rouse the countryside in response to the march of British troops toward Lexington.

Woody Holton. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999).

Holton provides a new interpretation of the factors that went into transforming wealthy planters into revolutionaries.

*Liberty!* PBS series on the American Revolution.

Using the actual words of revolutionaries, loyalists, and British political leaders, this six-hour series follows events from the Stamp Act to the Constitution.

Pauline Maier. *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (1998).

This path-breaking book points out that the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence were widely accepted by Americans, and proclaimed in state declarations of independence before Jefferson set them down in July 1776.

Edmund Morgan. *Benjamin Franklin* (2002).

A distinguished historian of colonial America draws a compelling portrait of Benjamin Franklin, following the printer-writer-scientist-diplomat through major crises and turning points in his life and the life of his country.

**CHAPTER 6****Recreating America: Independence and a New Nation, 1775–1783**

Sylvia Frey. *Water From a Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (1991).

This scholar of African American religion and culture examines the experiences of African Americans during the Revolution and the repression that followed in the Southern states that continued to rely on slave labor.

Joseph Plumb Martin. *Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Adventures of Joseph Plumb Martin*, ed. James Kirby Martin (1993).

The military experiences of a Massachusetts soldier who served with the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

Charles Royster. *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783* (1996).

Royster's in-depth account of military life during the Revolution provides insights into both the American character and the changing understanding of the political ideals of the war among the common soldiers.

Alfred Young. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (2000).

Young looks at the memories of an aging shoemaker who witnessed the Boston Tea Party. These memories reveal the meaning of the Revolution to ordinary Americans.

**CHAPTER 7****Competing Visions of the Virtuous Republic, 1770–1796**

Carol Berkin. *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* (2002).

A highly readable account of the crises that led to the constitutional convention and the men who created a new national government.

Lyman Butterfield, et al., eds. *The Book of Abigail and John: Selected Letters of the Adams Family, 1762–1784* (1975).

The editors of the Adams Papers have collected part of the extensive correspondence between John and Abigail Adams during the critical decades of the independence movement.

Saul Cornell. *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (1999).

A perceptive analysis of the ideology of dissent and its legacy in American political life.

Joseph Ellis. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (2002).

An award-winning study of the most notable leaders of the American Revolution, and an examination of their political ideas and actions.

Thomas P. Slaughter. *The Whiskey Rebellion* (1986).

A vivid account of the major challenge to the Washington government.

Gordon Wood. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1789* (1998)

An award winning examination of the ideals and political principles that form the basis of the American republic.

**CHAPTER 8****The Early Republic, 1796–1804**

Stephen E. Ambrose. *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (1996).

A critically acclaimed and highly readable narrative exploring the relationship between Jefferson and Lewis and their efforts to acquire and explore Louisiana.

Alexander DeConde. *This Affair of Louisiana* (1976).

Dated, but still the best overview of the diplomacy surrounding the Louisiana Purchase.

Joseph J. Ellis. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (1996).

Winner of the National Book Award, this biography focuses on Jefferson's personality seeking to expose his inner character; highly readable.

Joanne B. Freeman. *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (2001).

Jeffrey L. Pasley. "The Tyranny of Printers": *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (2001).

Taken together, these two groundbreaking studies of political culture in the Early Republic bring a whole set of new perspectives to the topic. Freeman concentrates on honor as a political force, while Pasley illustrates the power of an increasingly self-conscious press in shaping the political landscape.

David McCullough. *John Adams* (2001).

A highly acclaimed and extremely readable biography of one of America's true founding fathers.

James Ronda. *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians* (1984).

A bold retelling of the expedition's story, showcasing the Indian role in both Lewis and Clark's and the nation's successful expansion into the Louisiana Territory and beyond.

## CHAPTER 9 Increasing Conflict and War, 1805–1815

Gregory E. Dowd. *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (1992).

Hailed by many as one of the best works on Native American history, this well-written study covers the efforts by Indians to unite in defense of their lands and heritages, culminating in the struggles during the War of 1812.

R. David Edmunds. *The Shawnee Prophet* (1983); *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (1984).

Each of these biographies is a masterpiece, but taken together, they present the most complete recounting of the lives and accomplishments of these two fascinating Shawnee brothers and their historical world.

John Denis Haeger. *John Jacob Astor: Business and Finance in the Early Republic* (1991).

William E. Foley and C. David Rice. *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis* (1983).

Taken together, these two books provide a comprehensive overview of the fur trade during its early years, showcasing the importance of business tycoons like Astor and the Chouteaus and demystifying this huge business enterprise.

Donald Hickey. *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (1989).

Arguably the best single-volume history of the war, encyclopedic in content, but so colorfully written that it will hold anyone's attention.

Robert A. Rutland. *Madison's Alternatives: The Jeffersonian Republicans and the Coming of War, 1805–1812* (1975).

An interesting review of the events leading up to the outbreak of war in 1812 and the various alternatives Jefferson and Madison had to choose from in facing the evolving diplomatic and political crises.

## CHAPTER 10 The Rise of a New Nation, 1815–1836

George Dangerfield. *The Era of Good Feelings* (1952).

An older book, but so well written and informative that it deserves its status as a classic. All students will enjoy this grand overview.

Angie Debo. *And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes* (1940; reprint, 1972).

A classic work by one of America's most talented and sensitive historical writers, a truly engaging history of this tragic sequence of events.

Richard E. Ellis. *The Union at Risk: Jacksonian Democracy, States' Rights, and the Nullification Crisis* (1987).

An invigorating reconsideration of the Nullification Crisis set in context with the other problems that beset the Jackson administration, suggesting how close the nation came to civil war in the 1830s.

Charles G. Sellers. *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (1991).

A far-reaching reassessment of economics and politics during this period focusing on the rise of the market economy and the responses, both positive and negative, that led to the rise of Jacksonian democracy.

George Rogers Taylor. *The Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860* (1951).

The only comprehensive treatment of changes in transportation during the antebellum period and their economic impact. Nicely written.

John William Ward. *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (1955).

More a study of American culture during the age of Jackson than a biography of the man himself, Ward seeks to explain Old Hickory's status as a living myth during his own time and as a continuing monument in American history.

## CHAPTER 11 The Great Transformation: Growth and Expansion, 1828–1848

Ira Berlin. *Slaves Without Masters* (1975).

A masterful study of a forgotten population: free African Americans in the Old South. Lively and informative.

Ray Allen Billington. *America's Frontier Heritage* (1966).

Patricia Nelson Limerick. *The Legacy of Conquest* (1988).

Two classics in the field of American western history; Billington represents the classic Turnerian perspective while Limerick gives voice to the anti-Turnerian "New Western History."

Stuart M. Blumin. *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (1989).

Considered by many to be the most comprehensive overview of the emergence of the middle class in America during the nineteenth century.

Bill Cecil-Fronsman. *Common Whites: Class and Culture in Antebellum North Carolina* (1992).

A pioneering effort to describe the culture, lifestyle, and political economy shared by the antebellum South's majority population: nonslaveholding whites. Though confined in geographical scope, the study is suggestive of conditions that may have prevailed throughout the region.

Thomas Dublin. *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826–1860* (1979). An interesting look at the way in which the nature of work changed and the sorts of changes that were brought to one manufacturing community.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. *Within the Plantation Household* (1988).

A look at the lives of black and white women in the antebellum South. This study is quite long, but is well written and very informative.

Isabel Lehuu. *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (2000).

An overview of the explosion in print media during the early nineteenth century and its role in shaping national culture.

Donald W. Meinig. *Imperial Texas* (1969).

A fascinating look at Texas history by a leading historical geographer.

Christopher L. Miller. *Prophetic Worlds* (2003).

This new edition includes commentary that helps to define the debates that this book has sparked about the history of the Pacific Northwest during the pioneer era.

Kenneth N. Owens, ed. *Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World* (2002).

A collection of essays by leading scholars about the California Gold Rush and its impact on both national and international life.

Wallace E. Stegner. *The Gathering of Zion* (1964).

A masterfully written history of the Mormon Trail by one of the West's leading literary figures.

John David Unruh. *The Plains Across* (1979).

Arguably the best one-volume account of the overland passage to Oregon. The many pages melt as the author captures the reader in the adventure of the Oregon Trail.

## CHAPTER 12 Responses to the Great Transformation, 1828–1848

Eugene D. Genovese. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (1979).

Although it focuses somewhat narrowly on confrontation, as opposed to more subtle forms of resistance, this study traces the emergence of African American political organization from its roots in antebellum slave revolts.

Karen Haltunen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (1982).

A wonderfully well-researched study of an emerging class defining and shaping itself in the evolving world of early nineteenth-century urban space.

Thomas R. Hietala. *Manifest Design* (1985).

An interesting and well-written interpretation of the Mexican War and the events leading up to it.

Edward Pessen. *Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement* (1967).

A look at early labor movements and reform by one of America's leading radical scholars.

Ronald G. Walters. *American Reformers, 1815–1860* (1978).

The best overview of the reform movements and key personalities who guided them during this difficult period in American history.

Susan Zaeske. *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* (2003).

A fascinating study of how participation in reform campaigns helped lead early nineteenth-century women into a new sense of political identity.

## CHAPTER 13 Sectional Conflict and Shattered Union, 1848–1860

Don E. Fehrenbacher. *Prelude to Greatness* (1962).

A well-written and interesting account of Lincoln's early career.

Don E. Fehrenbacher. *Slavery, Law, and Politics: The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective* (1981).

An excellent interpretive account of this landmark antebellum legal decision, placing it firmly into historical context.

William E. Gienapp, et al. *Essays in American Antebellum Politics, 1840–1860* (1982).

A collection of essays by the rising generation of new political scholars. Exciting and challenging reading.

Michael F. Holt. *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (1978).

Arguably the best single-volume discussion of the political problems besetting the nation during this critical decade.

Stephen B. Oates. *To Purge This Land with Blood* (1984).

The best biography to date on John Brown, focusing on his role in the emerging sectional crisis during the 1850s.

David Potter. *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (1976).

An extremely long and detailed work but beautifully written and informative.

James Rawley. *Race and Politics: "Bleeding Kansas" and the Coming of the Civil War* (1969).

An interesting look at the conflicts in Kansas, centering upon racial attitudes in the West. Insightful and captivating reading.

Harriet Beecher Stowe. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852; reprint, 1982).

This edition includes notes and chronology by noted social historian Kathryn Kish Sklar, making it especially informative.

## CHAPTER 14

### A Violent Choice: Civil War, 1861–1865

Bruce Catton. *This Hallowed Ground: The Story of the Union Side of the Civil War* (1956).

Catton is probably the best in the huge company of popular writers on the Civil War. This is his most comprehensive single-volume work. More detailed but still very interesting titles by Catton include *Glory Road: The Bloody Route from Fredericksburg to Gettysburg* (1952), *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (1962), *A Stillness at Appomattox* (1953), and *Grant Moves South* (1960).

Paul D. Escott. *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (1978).

An excellent overview of internal political problems in the Confederacy by a leading Civil War historian.

Ann Giesberg. *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (2000).

A study of how women's activism in forming the sanitary movement during the Civil War recast their view of themselves as political figures and helped shape an emerging women's movement.

Alvin M. Josephy. *The Civil War in the American West* (1991).

A former editor for *American Heritage*, Josephy writes an interesting and readable story about this little-known chapter in Civil War history.

William Marvel. *The Alabama & the Kearsarge: The Sailor's Civil War* (1996).

Military and social historians have compared this new study favorably with *The Life of Billy Yank* (1952) and *The Life of Johnny Reb* (1943), Bell Irvin Wiley's classic studies of life for the common soldier, calling it an insightful narrative of the Civil War experience for the common sailor.

James McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (1988).

Hailed by many as the best single-volume history of the Civil War era; comprehensive and very well written.

Emory M. Thomas. *The Confederate Nation* (1979).

A classic history of the Confederacy by an excellent southern historian.

Garry Wills. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* (1992).

A prize-winning look at Lincoln's rhetoric and the ways in which his speeches, especially his Gettysburg Address, recast American ideas about equality, freedom, and democracy. Exquisitely written by a master biographer.

## CHAPTER 15

### Reconstruction: High Hopes and Shattered Dreams, 1865–1877

W. E. B. Du Bois. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (1935; reprint edns., 1998, 2007).

Written more than seventy years ago, Du Bois's classic book is still useful for information and insights. Recent editions usually include useful introductions that place Du Bois's work into the context of work by subsequent historians.

Carol Faulkner. *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement* (2004).

A new study of the role of women in the Freedmen's Bureau and in federal Reconstruction policy more generally.

Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (1988; reprint, 2002).

A thorough treatment, incorporating insights from many historians who have written on the subject during the fifty years preceding its publication.

Leon F. Litwack. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (1979).

Litwack focuses on the experience of the freed people.

William S. McFeely. *Frederick Douglass* (1991).

A highly readable biography of the most prominent black political leader of the nineteenth century.

Michael Perman. *Emancipation and Reconstruction*, 2nd ed. (2003).

A good, short and well written introduction to the topic.

Hans L. Trefousse. *Thaddeus Stevens: Nineteenth-Century Egalitarian* (1997).

A recent study of perhaps the most important leader of the Radical Republicans.

C. Vann Woodward. *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction*, rev. ed. (1956; reprint, 2001).

The classic account of the Compromise of 1877 with an afterward by William S. McFeely.

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# Documents

## *Declaration of Independence in Congress, July 4, 1776*

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining, in the mean time, exposed to all the dangers of invasions from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by

our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

For imposing taxes on us without our consent;

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury;

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offenses;

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies;

For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments;

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow-citizens, taken captive on the high seas, to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in our attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity; and we have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

JOHN HANCOCK *and fifty-five others*

# *Constitution of the United States of America and Amendments\**

## PREAMBLE

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

## ARTICLE I

**Section 1** All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

**Section 2** The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States, and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature.

No person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, *which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons.* The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative; *and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.*

When vacancies happen in the representation from any State, the Executive authority thereof shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other officers; and shall have the sole power of impeachment.

**Section 3** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote.

*Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three classes. The seats of the Senators of the first class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second year, of the second class at the expiration of the fourth year, and of the third class at the expiration of the sixth year; so that one-third may be chosen every second year; and if vacancies happen by resignation or otherwise, during the recess of the legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary appointments until the next meeting of the legislature, which shall then fill such vacancies.*

No person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice-President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other officers, and also a President *pro tempore*, in the absence of the Vice-President, or when he shall exercise the office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from the office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States: but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment, according to law.

**Section 4** The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives shall be

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\* Passages no longer in effect are printed in italic type.

prescribed in each State by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting *shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.*

**Section 5** Each house shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members, and a majority of each shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, in such manner, and under such penalties, as each house may provide.

Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member.

Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either house on any question shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal.

Neither house, during the session of Congress, shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two houses shall be sitting.

**Section 6** The Senators and Representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law and paid out of the treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any speech or debate in either house, they shall not be questioned in any other place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the emoluments whereof shall have been increased, during such time; and no person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either house during his continuance in office.

**Section 7** All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills.

Every bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a

law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it with objections to that house in which it originated, who shall enter the objections at large on their journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such reconsideration two-thirds of that house shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections, to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and, if approved by two-thirds of that house, it shall become a law. But in all such cases the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the persons voting for and against the bill shall be entered on the journal of each house respectively. If any bill shall not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their adjournment prevent its return, in which case it shall not be a law.

Every order, resolution, or vote to which the concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the same shall take effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two-thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the case of a bill.

**Section 8** The Congress shall have power

To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;

To establish an uniform rule of naturalization, and uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures;

To provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States;

To establish post offices and post roads;

To promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries;

To constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

To define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas and offenses against the law of nations;

To declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water;

To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years;

To provide and maintain a navy;

To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State, in which the same shall be, for erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings; — and

To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

**Section 9** *The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808; but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding \$10 for each person.*

The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.

No bill of attainder or ex post facto law shall be passed.

No capitation, or other direct, tax shall be laid, unless in proportion to the census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any State.

No preference shall be given by any regulation of commerce or revenue to the ports of one State over those of another; nor shall vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.

No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law; and a regular statement and account of the receipts and expenditures of all public money shall be published from time to time.

No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: and no person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state.

**Section 10** No State shall enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation; grant letters of marque and reprisal; coin money; emit bills of credit; make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts; pass any bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility.

No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any imposts or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws: and the net produce of all duties and imposts, laid by any State on imports or exports, shall be for the use of the treasury of the United States; and all such laws shall be subject to the revision and control of the Congress.

No State shall, without the consent of Congress, lay any duty of tonnage, keep troops or ships of war in time of peace, enter into any agreement or compact with another State, or with a foreign power, or engage in war, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay.

## ARTICLE II

**Section 1** The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years, and, together with the Vice-President, chosen for the same term, be elected as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress; but no Senator or Representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

*The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each; which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates, and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for President; and if no person have a majority, then from the five highest on the list said house shall in like manner choose the President. But in choosing the President the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice-President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the Vice-President.*

The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors and the day on which they shall give their votes; which day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No person except a natural-born citizen, or a citizen of the United States at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty-five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.

In cases of the removal of the President from office or of his death, res.ignation, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office, the same shall devolve on the Vice-President, and the Congress may by law provide for the case of removal, death, resignation, or inability, both of the President and Vice-President, declaring what officer shall then act as President, and such officer shall act accordingly, until the disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated times, receive for his services a compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that period any other emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of the

President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

**Section 2** The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices, and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.

He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law: but Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.

The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.

**Section 3** He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States.

**Section 4** The President, Vice-President and all civil officers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and on conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

### ARTICLE III

**Section 1** The judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The judges, both of the Supreme and inferior courts, shall hold their offices during good behavior, and shall, at stated times, receive for their services a compensation

which shall not be diminished during their continuance in office.

**Section 2** The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under this Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made, under their authority;—to all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls;—to all cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction;—to controversies to which the United States shall be a party;—to controversies between two or more States;—*between a State and citizens of another State;*—between citizens of different States;—between citizens of the same State claiming lands under grants of different States, and between a State, or the citizens thereof, and foreign states, citizens or subjects.

In all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and those in which a State shall be party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. In all the other cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations, as the Congress shall make.

The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury; and such trial shall be held in the State where said crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the trial shall be at such place or places as the Congress may by law have directed.

**Section 3** Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted.

#### ARTICLE IV

**Section 1** Full faith and credit shall be given in each State to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records, and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof.

**Section 2** The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.

A person charged in any State with treason, felony, or other crime, who shall flee from justice, and be found in another

State, shall on demand of the executive authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having jurisdiction of the crime.

*No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.*

**Section 3** New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

**Section 4** The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.

#### ARTICLE V

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress; provided that no amendments which may be made prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any manner affect the first and fourth clauses in the ninth section of the first article; and that no State, without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate.

#### ARTICLE VI

All debts contracted and engagements entered into, before the adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.

This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the

United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several State legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

## ARTICLE VII

The ratification of the conventions of nine States shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the same.

Done in Convention by the unanimous consent of the States present, the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the twelfth. In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names.

GEORGE WASHINGTON *and thirty-seven others*

## *Amendments to the Constitution\**

### AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

### AMENDMENT II

A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

### AMENDMENT III

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

### AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

### AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb;

nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

### AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

### AMENDMENT VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

### AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

### AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

### AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

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\* The first ten Amendments (the Bill of Rights) were adopted in 1791.

**AMENDMENT XI***[Adopted 1798]*

The judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by citizens of another State, or by citizens or subjects of any foreign state.

**AMENDMENT XII***[Adopted 1804]*

The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate;—the President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted;—the person having the greatest number of votes for President shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President.

The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

**AMENDMENT XIII***[Adopted 1865]*

**Section 1** Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

**Section 2** Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**AMENDMENT XIV***[Adopted 1868]*

**Section 1** All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

**Section 2** Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a State, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

**Section 3** No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or Elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each house, remove such disability.

**Section 4** The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing

insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations, and claims shall be held illegal and void.

**Section 5** The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

#### AMENDMENT XV

[*Adopted 1870*]

**Section 1** The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

**Section 2** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

#### AMENDMENT XVI

[*Adopted 1913*]

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

#### AMENDMENT XVII

[*Adopted 1913*]

**Section 1** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of [voters for] the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

**Section 2** When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, that the Legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the Legislature may direct.

**Section 3** This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

#### AMENDMENT XVIII

[*Adopted 1919; Repealed 1933*]

**Section 1** After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of

intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof, for beverage purposes, is hereby prohibited.

**Section 2** The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**Section 3** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided by the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission thereof to the States by the Congress.

#### AMENDMENT XIX

[*Adopted 1920*]

**Section 1** The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

**Section 2** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

#### AMENDMENT XX

[*Adopted 1933*]

**Section 1** The terms of the President and Vice-President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3rd day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

**Section 2** The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3rd day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

**Section 3** If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President-elect shall have died, the Vice-President-elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President-elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice-President-elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President-elect nor a Vice-President-elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such persons shall act accordingly until a President or Vice-President shall have qualified.

**Section 4** The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom

the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice-President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

**Section 5** Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

**Section 6** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

## AMENDMENT XXI

[*Adopted 1933*]

**Section 1** The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

**Section 2** The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or Possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

**Section 3** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of submission thereof to the States by the Congress.

## AMENDMENT XXII

[*Adopted 1951*]

**Section 1** No person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of President more than once. But this article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

**Section 2** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

## AMENDMENT XXIII

[*Adopted 1961*]

**Section 1** The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice-President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered for the purposes of the election of President and Vice-President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

**Section 2** The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## AMENDMENT XXIV

[*Adopted 1964*]

**Section 1** The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice-President, for electors for President or Vice-President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

**Section 2** The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## AMENDMENT XXV

[*Adopted 1967*]

**Section 1** In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice-President shall become President.

**Section 2** Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice-President, the President shall nominate a Vice-President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

**Section 3** Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice-President as Acting President.

**Section 4** Whenever the Vice-President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments

or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice-President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice-President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department[s] or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after

Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice-President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

#### AMENDMENT XXVI

*[Adopted 1971]*

**Section 1** The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

**Section 2** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

#### AMENDMENT XXVII

*[Adopted 1992]*

No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

# Presidential Elections

Year	Number of States	Candidates	Parties	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Vote	% Voter Participation <sup>a</sup>
<b>1789</b>	11	<b>George Washington</b>	No party			69	
		John Adams	designations			34	
		Other candidates				35	
<b>1792</b>	15	<b>George Washington</b>	No party			132	
		John Adams	designations			77	
		George Clinton				50	
		Other candidates				5	
<b>1796</b>	16	<b>John Adams</b>	Federalist			71	
		Thomas Jefferson	Democratic-Republican			68	
		Thomas Pinckney	Federalist			59	
		Aaron Burr	Democratic-Republican			30	
		Other candidates				48	
<b>1800</b>	16	<b>Thomas Jefferson</b>	Democratic-Republican			73	
		Aaron Burr	Democratic-Republican			73	
		John Adams	Federalist			65	
		Charles C. Pinckney	Federalist			64	
		John Jay	Federalist			1	
<b>1804</b>	17	<b>Thomas Jefferson</b>	Democratic-Republican			162	
		Charles C. Pinckney	Federalist			14	
<b>1808</b>	17	<b>James Madison</b>	Democratic-Republican			122	
		Charles C. Pinckney	Federalist			47	
		George Clinton	Democratic-Republican			6	
<b>1812</b>	18	<b>James Madison</b>	Democratic-Republican			128	
		DeWitt Clinton	Federalist			89	
<b>1816</b>	19	<b>James Monroe</b>	Democratic-Republican			183	
		Rufus King	Federalist			34	
<b>1820</b>	24	<b>James Monroe</b>	Democratic-Republican			231	
		John Quincy Adams	Independent-Republican			1	
<b>1824</b>	24	<b>John Quincy Adams</b>	Democratic-Republican	108,740	30.5	84	26.9
		Andrew Jackson	Democratic-Republican	153,544	43.1	99	
		Henry Clay	Democratic-Republican	47,136	13.2	37	
		William H. Crawford	Democratic-Republican	46,618	13.1	41	
<b>1828</b>	24	<b>Andrew Jackson</b>	Democratic	647,286	56.0	178	57.6
		John Quincy Adams	National Republican	508,064	44.0	83	

Year	Number of States	Candidates	Parties	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Vote	% Voter Participation <sup>a</sup>
<b>1832</b>	24	<b>Andrew Jackson</b>	Democratic	688,242	54.5	219	55.4
		Henry Clay	National Republican	473,462	37.5	49	
		William Wirt	Anti-Masonic		8.0	7	
		John Floyd	Democratic	101,051		11	
<b>1836</b>	26	<b>Martin Van Buren</b>	Democratic	765,483	50.9	170	57.8
		William H. Harrison	Whig			73	
		Hugh L. White	Whig			26	
		Daniel Webster	Whig	739,795	49.1	14	
		W. P. Mangum	Whig			11	
<b>1840</b>	26	<b>William H. Harrison</b>	Whig	1,274,624	53.1	234	80.2
		Martin Van Buren	Democratic	1,127,781	46.9	60	
<b>1844</b>	26	<b>James K. Polk</b>	Democratic	1,338,464	49.6	170	78.9
		Henry Clay	Whig	1,300,097	48.1	105	
		James G. Birney	Liberty	62,300	2.3		
<b>1848</b>	30	<b>Zachary Taylor</b>	Whig	1,360,967	47.4	163	72.7
		Lewis Cass	Democratic	1,222,342	42.5	127	
		Martin Van Buren	Free-Soil	291,263	10.1		
<b>1852</b>	31	<b>Franklin Pierce</b>	Democratic	1,601,117	50.9	254	69.6
		Winfield Scott	Whig	1,385,453	44.1	42	
		John P. Hale	Free-Soil	155,825	5.0		
<b>1856</b>	31	<b>James Buchanan</b>	Democratic	1,832,955	45.3	174	78.9
		John C. Frémont	Republican	1,339,932	33.1	114	
		Millard Fillmore	American	871,731	21.6	8	
<b>1860</b>	33	<b>Abraham Lincoln</b>	Republican	1,865,593	39.8	180	81.2
		Stephen A. Douglas	Democratic	1,382,713	29.5	12	
		John C. Breckinridge	Democratic	848,356	18.1	72	
		John Bell	Constitutional Union	592,906	12.6	39	
<b>1864</b>	36	<b>Abraham Lincoln</b>	Republican	2,206,938	55.0	212	73.8
		George B. McClellan	Democratic	1,803,787	45.0	21	
<b>1868</b>	37	<b>Ulysses S. Grant</b>	Republican	3,013,421	52.7	214	78.1
		Horatio Seymour	Democratic	2,706,829	47.3	80	
<b>1872</b>	37	<b>Ulysses S. Grant</b>	Republican	3,596,745	55.6	286	71.3
		Horace Greeley	Democratic	2,843,446	43.9		b
<b>1876</b>	38	<b>Rutherford B. Hayes</b>	Republican	4,036,572	48.0	185	81.8
		Samuel J. Tilden	Democratic	4,284,020	51.0	184	
<b>1880</b>	38	<b>James A. Garfield</b>	Republican	4,453,295	48.5	214	79.4
		Winfield S. Hancock	Democratic	4,414,082	48.1	155	
		James B. Weaver	Greenback-Labor	308,578	3.4		
<b>1884</b>	38	<b>Grover Cleveland</b>	Democratic	4,879,507	48.5	219	77.5
		James G. Blaine	Republican	4,850,293	48.2	182	
		Benjamin F. Butler	Greenback-Labor	175,370	1.8		
		John P. St. John	Prohibition	150,369	1.5		

Year	Number of States	Candidates	Parties	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Vote	% Voter Participation <sup>a</sup>
<b>1888</b>	38	<b>Benjamin Harrison</b>	Republican	5,477,129	47.9	233	79.3
		Grover Cleveland	Democratic	5,537,857	48.6	168	
		Clinton B. Fisk	Prohibition	249,506	2.2		
		Anson J. Streeter	Union Labor	146,935	1.3		
<b>1892</b>	44	<b>Grover Cleveland</b>	Democratic	5,555,426	46.1	277	74.7
		Benjamin Harrison	Republican	5,182,690	43.0	145	
		James B. Weaver	People's	1,029,846	8.5	22	
		John Bidwell	Prohibition	264,133	2.2		
<b>1896</b>	45	<b>William McKinley</b>	Republican	7,102,246	51.1	271	79.3
		William J. Bryan	Democratic	6,492,559	47.7	176	
<b>1900</b>	45	<b>William McKinley</b>	Republican	7,218,491	51.7	292	73.2
		William J. Bryan	Democratic; Populist	6,356,734	45.5	155	
		John C. Wooley	Prohibition	208,914	1.5		
<b>1904</b>	45	<b>Theodore Roosevelt</b>	Republican	7,628,461	57.4	336	65.2
		Alton B. Parker	Democratic	5,084,223	37.6	140	
		Eugene V. Debs	Socialist	402,283	3.0		
		Silas C. Swallow	Prohibition	258,536	1.9		
<b>1908</b>	46	<b>William H. Taft</b>	Republican	7,675,320	51.6	321	65.4
		William J. Bryan	Democratic	6,412,294	43.1	162	
		Eugene V. Debs	Socialist	420,793	2.8		
		Eugene W. Chafin	Prohibition	253,840	1.7		
<b>1912</b>	48	<b>Woodrow Wilson</b>	Democratic	6,296,547	41.9	435	58.8
		Theodore Roosevelt	Progressive	4,118,571	27.4	88	
		William H. Taft	Republican	3,486,720	23.2	8	
		Eugene V. Debs	Socialist	900,672	6.0		
		Eugene W. Chafin	Prohibition	206,275	1.4		
<b>1916</b>	48	<b>Woodrow Wilson</b>	Democratic	9,127,695	49.4	277	61.6
		Charles E. Hughes	Republican	8,533,507	46.2	254	
		A. L. Benson	Socialist	585,113	3.2		
		J. Frank Hanly	Prohibition	220,506	1.2		
<b>1920</b>	48	<b>Warren G. Harding</b>	Republican	16,143,407	60.4	404	49.2
		James M. Cox	Democratic	9,130,328	34.2	127	
		Eugene V. Debs	Socialist	919,799	3.4		
		P. P. Christensen	Farmer-Labor	265,411	1.0		
<b>1924</b>	48	<b>Calvin Coolidge</b>	Republican	15,718,211	54.0	382	48.9
		John W. Davis	Democratic	8,385,283	28.8	136	
		Robert M. La Follette	Progressive	4,831,289	16.6	13	
<b>1928</b>	48	<b>Herbert C. Hoover</b>	Republican	21,391,993	58.2	444	56.9
		Alfred E. Smith	Democratic	15,016,169	40.9	87	
<b>1932</b>	48	<b>Franklin D. Roosevelt</b>	Democratic	22,809,638	57.4	472	56.9
		Herbert C. Hoover	Republican	15,758,901	39.7	59	
		Norman Thomas	Socialist	881,951	2.2		

Year	Number of States	Candidates	Parties	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Vote	% Voter Participation <sup>a</sup>
<b>1936</b>	48	<b>Franklin D. Roosevelt</b>	Democratic	27,752,869	60.8	523	61.0
		Alfred M. Landon	Republican	16,674,665	36.5	8	
		William Lemke	Union	882,479	1.9		
<b>1940</b>	48	<b>Franklin D. Roosevelt</b>	Democratic	27,307,819	54.8	449	62.5
		Wendell L. Wilkie	Republican	22,321,018	44.8	82	
<b>1944</b>	48	<b>Franklin D. Roosevelt</b>	Democratic	25,606,585	53.5	432	55.9
		Thomas E. Dewey	Republican	22,014,745	46.0	99	
<b>1948</b>	48	<b>Harry S Truman</b>	Democratic	24,179,345	49.6	303	53.0
		Thomas E. Dewey	Republican	21,991,291	45.1	189	
		J. Strom Thurmond	States' Rights	1,176,125	2.4	39	
		Henry A. Wallace	Progressive	1,157,326	2.4		
<b>1952</b>	48	<b>Dwight D. Eisenhower</b>	Republican	33,936,234	55.1	442	63.3
		Adlai E. Stevenson	Democratic	27,314,992	44.4	89	
<b>1956</b>	48	<b>Dwight D. Eisenhower</b>	Republican	35,590,472	57.6	457	60.6
		Adlai E. Stevenson	Democratic	26,022,752	42.1	73	
<b>1960</b>	50	<b>John F. Kennedy</b>	Democratic	34,226,731	49.7	303	62.8
		Richard M. Nixon	Republican	34,108,157	49.5	219	
<b>1964</b>	50	<b>Lyndon B. Johnson</b>	Democratic	43,129,566	61.1	486	61.7
		Barry M. Goldwater	Republican	27,178,188	38.5	52	
<b>1968</b>	50	<b>Richard M. Nixon</b>	Republican	31,785,480	43.4	301	60.6
		Hubert H. Humphrey	Democratic	31,275,166	42.7	191	
		George C. Wallace	American Independent	9,906,473	13.5	46	
<b>1972</b>	50	<b>Richard M. Nixon</b>	Republican	47,169,911	60.7	520	55.2
		George S. McGovern	Democratic	29,170,383	37.5	17	
		John G. Schmitz	American	1,099,482	1.4		
<b>1976</b>	50	<b>Jimmy Carter</b>	Democratic	40,830,763	50.1	297	53.5
		Gerald R. Ford	Republican	39,147,793	48.0	240	
<b>1980</b>	50	<b>Ronald Reagan</b>	Republican	43,899,248	50.8	489	52.6
		Jimmy Carter	Democratic	35,481,432	41.0	49	
		John B. Anderson	Independent	5,719,437	6.6	0	
		Ed Clark	Libertarian	920,859	1.1	0	
<b>1984</b>	50	<b>Ronald Reagan</b>	Republican	54,455,075	58.8	525	53.1
		Walter Mondale	Democratic	37,577,185	40.6	13	
<b>1988</b>	50	<b>George Bush</b>	Republican	48,901,046	53.4	426	50.2
		Michael Dukakis	Democratic	41,809,030	45.6	111 <sup>c</sup>	
<b>1992</b>	50	<b>Bill Clinton</b>	Democratic	44,908,233	43.0	370	55.0
		George Bush	Republican	39,102,282	37.4	168	
		Ross Perot	Independent	19,741,048	18.9	0	
<b>1996</b>	50	<b>Bill Clinton</b>	Democratic	47,401,054	49.2	379	49.0
		Robert Dole	Republican	39,197,350	40.7	159	
		Ross Perot	Independent	8,085,285	8.4	0	
		Ralph Nader	Green	684,871	0.7	0	

Year	Number of States	Candidates	Parties	Popular Vote	% of Popular Vote	Electoral Vote	% Voter Participation <sup>a</sup>
<b>2000</b>	50	<b>George W. Bush</b>	Republican	50,456,169	47.88	271	50.7
		Albert Gore, Jr.	Democratic	50,996,116	48.39	267	
		Ralph Nader	Green	2,783,728	2.72	0	
<b>2004</b>	50	<b>George W. Bush</b>	Republican	62,040,610	51.0	286	60.7
		John F. Kerry	Democratic	59,028,109	48.0	252	
		Ralph Nader	Independent	463,653	1.0	0	
<b>2008</b>	50	<b>Barack Obama</b>	Democratic	69,498,215	52.9	365	63
		John McCain	Republican	59,948,240	45.7	173	

Candidates receiving less than 1 percent of the popular vote have been omitted. Thus the percentage of popular vote given for any election year may not total 100 percent.

Before the passage of the Twelfth Amendment in 1804, the Electoral College voted for two presidential candidates; the runner-up became vice president.

Before 1824, most presidential electors were chosen by state legislatures, not by popular vote.

<sup>a</sup>Percent of voting-age population casting ballots (eligible voters).

<sup>b</sup>Greeley died shortly after the election; the electors supporting him then divided their votes among minor candidates.

<sup>c</sup>One elector from West Virginia cast her Electoral College presidential ballot for Lloyd Bentsen, the Democratic Party's vice-presidential candidate.

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