

1. The Early Republic: 1789 - 1828

After the United States won the American Revolution and created a new nation, it had to establish a government. America did this with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The nation elected **George Washington** as the first president, and he established the beginnings of the federal government and the early republic.

In Washington's first cabinet, political parties formed called the Federalists (led by Alexander Hamilton) and the Democratic-Republicans (led by Thomas Jefferson). The Federalists believed in a stronger national government and an economy based on manufacturing. The Democratic Republicans wanted stronger states. In the end, Washington sided with Hamilton.

Washington also agreed with Hamilton on foreign policy. The president refused to get involved in the French Revolution and signed the Neutrality Proclamation. This document stated America would not take sides in disputes with European countries. In domestic policy, Washington was forced to assert the power of the national government when he led troops to put down a tax revolt in Pennsylvania called the Whiskey Rebellion.

Washington set precedents for the first five presidents as the young United States tried to establish itself as a nation, fight off another threat from Great Britain, and expand its borders to the Mississippi River.

Following Washington, **John Adams** was elected the second president. Adams faced both domestic and foreign problems. Overseas, Adams faced a humiliating issue with France. In trying to stop naval battles with the French, Adams sent negotiators to France. Secret French agents (X,Y,Z) met the Americans and demanded a loan and a bribe. This became known as the X, Y, Z Affair, and many Americans demanded war with the French. Wisely, Adams refused to go to war and managed to negotiate peace with the French leader Napoleon. In doing this, Adams endangered his re-election.

Meanwhile, at home, Adams decided to support the Alien and Sedition Acts. These laws restricted immigration and tried to stop criticism of the government. This was a clear violation of the First Amendment's freedom of speech and press.

After a disputed election, **Thomas Jefferson** became the third president. One of his great achievements was the Louisiana Purchase. This doubled the size of the United States and prompted the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This great adventure managed to map the west, open up trails, and record new plants and animals. It failed only in its goal to find a river route to the Pacific, the famed Northwest Passage. While successful at home, Jefferson faced challenges in foreign policy. He tried to deal with pirates in the Mediterranean Sea and attacks on American shipping by the French and English in the Atlantic. His attempt to stop such attacks resulted in the Embargo Act. This cut off trade with the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the law only hurt American businesses and the problem of safe shipping across the ocean would be pushed onto the shoulders of the next president.

James Madison was the president who did finally deal with attacks on American shipping. He decided to declare war on Britain for their interference with trade ships, impressment of American sailors, and the arming of western Indians. This led to the War of 1812. During this war between Britain and America, the British burned Washington D.C., and Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner. Also, Andrew Jackson became the hero of New Orleans when he defeated the British at the end of the war. The War of 1812 secured American independence from Britain, and propelled Jackson to the presidency.

The fifth president, **James Monroe**, ruled over a time known as the Era of Good Feeling. His main accomplishment was the Monroe Doctrine, which warned Europe to end colonization and expansion into the Americas.

2. The Presidency of Andrew Jackson, 1828 - 1837

Andrew Jackson was a controversial president, loved by the common man but hated by the rich and Native Americans. Many were suspicious of Jackson's presidency because he used a "spoils system" to give government jobs to friends and supporters, and he relied on his kitchen cabinet instead of his Senate approved advisors. Jackson was also a villain to Native Americans because he supported the Indian Removal Act. This led to the Trail of Tears, a route from Georgia to Oklahoma travelled by the Cherokee and other tribes as they were removed from their land to make way for white settlers.

Jackson's presidency also included the ending of the national bank and the nullification crisis. Jackson disliked the national bank because he thought it favored the wealthy and did little to help farmers and workers. He removed the money from the national bank and distributed it to state banks, and eventually vetoed the charter to renew the bank. In addition to confronting wealthy bankers, Jackson took on South Carolina in the nullification crisis. South Carolina refused to pay a tariff, asserting states' rights. This meant states should have the power to nullify (reject) national laws. Jackson disagreed with this and threatened to send troops to South Carolina to assert national power and force them to pay the tariff. South Carolina backed down, but states' rights supporters were angry with Jackson's tactics.

While Jackson angered many, he was beloved by the common man. His presidency is known as "Jacksonian Democracy" because Jackson believed in empowering regular people. During his elections, more white men were given the right to vote, which helped Jackson win the presidency. For good or bad, President Jackson changed the role of common men and the balance of power in American politics.

3. Manifest Destiny: Westward Expansion, 1803–1853

In the 1800s Americans believed they had a right to move west across North America, and a responsibility to bring democracy to the western territories. This idea was known as **Manifest Destiny**, or obvious fate.

The march west by Americans began with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. This vast new territory, bordered by the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, doubled the size of the United States. Next, America added Florida. With runaway slaves and Native Americans attacking Georgia from Spanish controlled Florida, President James Monroe insisted Spain take control of the territory or get out. In 1819, Spain sold Florida to the U.S. and received assurances that the United States would not try to take Texas.

By the 1840s, however, Texas was Mexican territory and American settlers were moving there in great numbers. The Texans (known as Texians) rebelled against Mexican rule and the Texas Revolution of 1836 resulted in a new nation: The Republic of Texas. Two key battles helped the Texans win their war against Mexico. The Battle of the Alamo resulted in a Mexican victory, but became an inspiration to Texans because the Mexicans killed or executed all of the defenders of the Alamo. Wanting revenge, Texans yelled, “Remember the Alamo” as they defeated the Mexican army at the Battle of San Jacinto.

The Republic of Texas remained an independent nation for nearly 10 years, but most of the inhabitants were American and wanted to join the United States. Texas statehood was controversial, however, because of slavery. Fearing a new slave state, many northerners stalled the addition of Texas to the U.S. Finally, with the presidency of James Polk, Texas became a state in 1845.

Texas statehood was one reason for the Mexican-American War. Mexico never accepted the loss of Texas and disputed the border between Mexico and the United States. In 1846 Mexican soldiers shot at Americans defending the border between the two countries and war broke out. The Mexican-American War ended in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty forced Mexico to give up the northern half of its territory, and became known as the Mexican Cession. After two major wars with Mexico, the United States controlled Texas and the California/New Mexico Territories.

James Polk also took control of Oregon Country. He negotiated a treaty with Great Britain that split the territory in half at 49° N. The United States gained the southern part in 1846.

With the idea of Manifest Destiny, the United States became a continental nation, expanding from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. With new territory, Americans began to move west. In the 1830s and 1840s, pioneers travelled the Oregon and California Trails, facing challenges like the expense of moving, daunting mountain ranges and a shortage of supplies.

Despite the difficulties, “Oregon Fever” prompted groups like missionaries, Mormons, and ordinary families to move west. Sadly, Mormons moved west to escape religious persecution, while others went for riches or land. With the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the population explosion in California made it eligible for statehood in 1850.

4. The North and the South, 1800s

During the 1800s, while Americans were expanding into the west, the northern and southern parts of the United States were developing distinct economic and social systems.

The North

The **northern states** experienced rapid industrialization in the 1800s. Men like Eli Whitney and Samuel Slater brought methods of interchangeable parts and mass production to the United States. This led to factories, population growth, and urban centers throughout the north. In Rhode Island, Samuel Slater created factories that employed entire families, while in Lowell, Massachusetts young, single women worked in the textile mills. Such factories mass-produced items on assembly lines in order to efficiently create large numbers of identical goods. This Industrial Revolution began a shift from hand made to machine made goods.

A shift to factories dominated by machines created harsh working conditions and low pay for the unskilled labor toiling in the northern cities. To improve their wages and work environment, many people joined trade unions. At times, the unions called for strikes and protests against factory owners. Some protests turned violent.

The Industrial Revolution also attracted immigrants to the north. Many people came from Ireland to escape the potato famine or Germany to run from political violence. Later immigrants from eastern and southern Europe came through Ellis Island in New York City to find work in the industrial north. The increase in population caused problems in the northern urban areas, including poverty and disease. Also, with more and more immigration, some Americans felt threatened. They feared immigrants would take their jobs, and anti-immigrant groups called Nativists wanted to halt the flow of people into the United States.

Inventions were also a part of the Industrial Revolution. The telegraph sped up communication and helped spread news about everything from crop production to scientific discoveries. Additionally, steam ships and railroads revolutionized transportation helping with trade, the shipping of farm goods, and business. Sadly, the invention of the cotton gin sped up the production of cotton, but also led to an increase in the need for slaves in the south.

The South

Unlike the north, agriculture dominated the **southern states'** economy and social classes. The leaders of the south were wealthy plantation owners called planters. They often owned 100s of slaves, although the vast majority of southerners either owned no slaves or fewer than 5. Some white farmers, called yeoman farmers, were middle class, but most whites were poor.

Slavery drove the southern economy. Slaves were punished to insure obedience and the horrific conditions of slaves on the plantations led to rebellions and attempts to escape. Nat Turner led the most famous slave revolt in the 1830s in Virginia. His rebellion struck fear into the hearts of southerners and led to the harsh slave codes. Other slaves tried to escape on the Underground Railroad. The most famous "conductor" on the escape routes north was Harriet Tubman. She led 100s of slaves to freedom.

5. Reform Movements, 1800s

Americans confronted major problems in the 1800s. From education to prisons to poverty, reformers tried to improve the lives of the people of the United States. Inspired by the Christian movement known as the Second Great Awakening and the philosophy of Transcendentalism, two main reform movements emerged. They were **abolitionism** and the fight for **women's rights**.

Abolitionism was the efforts to end slavery. Famous abolitionists included William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth. Garrison wrote a famous newspaper called the Liberator. He befriended Frederick Douglass and the two traveled the country to spread the abolitionist message. Sojourner Truth also spoke out against slavery and the rights of women.

The women's movement came out of the efforts to end slavery. In 1848, reformers met in Seneca Falls, New York to start the demands for women's rights. This convention produced the Declaration of Sentiments. This document used the famous Declaration of Independence to insist on equality for women and to list complaints women had against the injustices they faced in a man's world. After 70 years of protests, including the arrest of Susan B. Anthony for voting in a presidential election, women finally gained the right to vote with the 19th Amendment in 1920.

6. Civil War and Reconstruction, 1850s -1870s

Countdown to Civil War

Throughout the 1800s, the United States confronted the issue of slavery and its expansion into the west. A series of **compromises failed** to keep the United States from splitting in two over the issue of slavery.

In 1820, the Missouri Compromise resolved the first great crisis over slavery by admitting Missouri to the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state. The compromise also drew a line across the Louisiana Territory. In the future, slavery was prohibited north of that line (36°, 30'N, north of Missouri's southern border).

The furor over slavery in new territories erupted again after the war with Mexico. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state while leaving the territories of New Mexico and Utah open to slavery. In addition, the compromise ended the slave trade in Washington D.C., and included a fugitive slave law.

Once again, compromise failed. Northerners refused to honor the Fugitive Slave Law. Attitudes on both sides hardened further by Harriet Beecher Stowe's powerful novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Supreme Court's decision on the Dred Scott case. In the Dred Scott case, African-Americans were denied U.S. citizenship, while the Kansas-Nebraska Act led to violence in Bleeding Kansas.

In Illinois, the issue of slavery was the focus of well-publicized debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Tempers – and fears – rose even higher after John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry.

For many southerners, Lincoln's election as president in 1860 was the last straw. Only northern states voted for Lincoln, showing how divided the nation was over slavery. Led by South Carolina, several southern states left the Union. When southerners fired on Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, the time for compromise had passed. The nation was poised on the brink of war.

The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861 – 1865, 1870s

At the start of the **Civil War**, President Lincoln's main goal was to preserve the Union. To keep the southern states from seceding, he said that he would allow them to keep their slaves as long as slavery did not expand west. The south did not believe Lincoln and 11 states seceded to form the Confederate States of America. They elected Jefferson Davis as president and their capital was Richmond, Virginia. The first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, South Carolina in April of 1861.

Both sides had some advantages. The north was industrialized and could raise money to fight the war. The south had a military tradition and the best officers. Also, the south only had to defend its territory and did not have to conquer enemy land. The Battle of Gettysburg became the turning point in the war. The southern army lost a ¼ of its men and would never be able to attack north again. Later, surrounded by Union troops, Robert E. Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia in April of 1865.

During the war, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. This freed the slaves in the rebelling southern states. Later he gave his famous Gettysburg Address at the dedication of a cemetery. In it he reminded Americans of the ideals of liberty and equality in the Declaration of Independence and the reasons for fighting the Civil War.

At the end of the Civil War, Lincoln wanted to quickly readmit the southern states into the Union. In his mind, **Reconstruction** was supposed to reunite the nation and rebuild the south. In addition, the United States passed the 13th Amendment freeing the slaves and the 15th Amendment giving black men the right to vote. The Freedman's Bureau was established to provide assistance to former slaves.

With Lincoln's death, Reconstruction went through many phases. In the end, Reconstruction failed. The south passed Black Codes, which restricted the freedom of African-Americans and Jim Crow Laws, which created segregation. Also, terrorist groups killed and intimidated black people throughout the south to stop them from voting, particularly the Ku Klux Klan. Reconstruction turned out to be a violent and disturbing time period in American history.