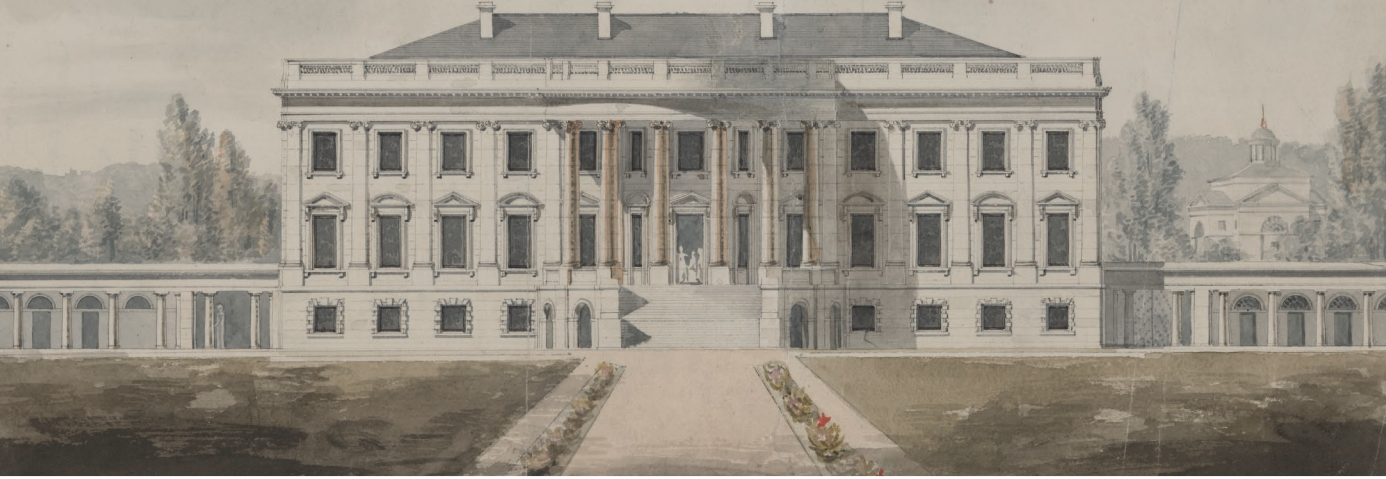


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THE UNFINISHED NATION

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ALAN BRINKLEY | JOHN M. GIGGIE | ANDREW J. HUEBNER



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THE UNFINISHED NATION

A Concise History of the American People

Tenth Edition

ALAN BRINKLEY

Columbia University

JOHN M. GIGGIE

University of Alabama

ANDREW J. HUEBNER

University of Alabama

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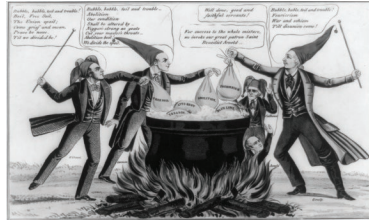
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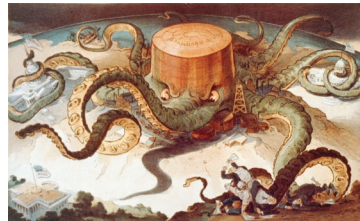
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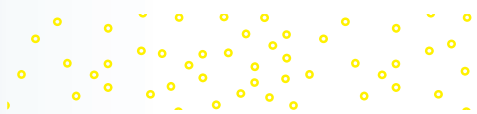
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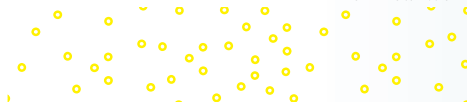
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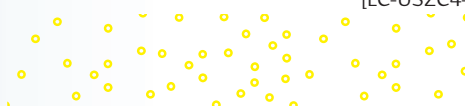
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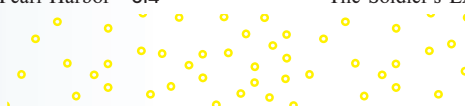
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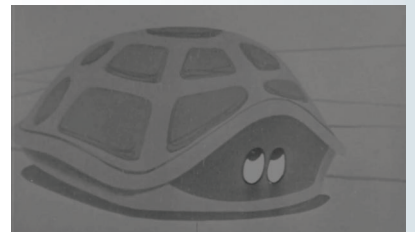
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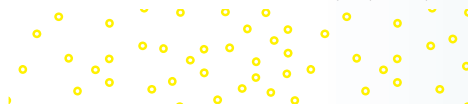
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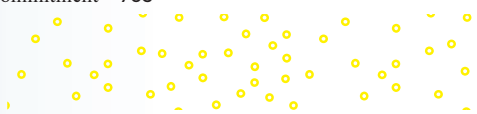
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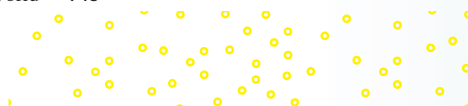
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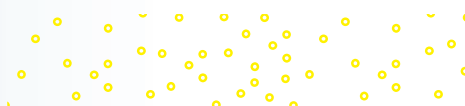
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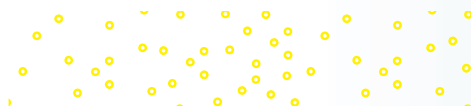
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PREFACE

The title *The Unfinished Nation* is meant to suggest several things. It is a reminder of the exceptional diversity of the United States—of the degree to which, despite all the many efforts to build a single, uniform definition of the meaning of American nationhood, that meaning remains contested. It is a reference to the centrality of change in American history—to the ways in which the nation has continually transformed itself and continues to do so in our own time. And it is also a description of the writing of American history itself—of the ways in which historians are engaged in a continuing, ever-unfinished process of asking new questions.

Like any history, *The Unfinished Nation* is a product of its time and reflects the views of the past that historians of recent generations have developed. The writing of our nation's history—like our nation itself—changes constantly. It is not, of course, the past that changes. Rather, historians adjust their perspectives and priorities, ask different kinds of questions, and uncover and incorporate new historical evidence. There are now, as there have always been, critics of changes in historical understanding who argue that history is a collection of facts and should not be subject to “interpretation” or “revision.” But historians insist that history is not simply a collection of facts. Names and dates and a record of events are only the beginning of historical understanding. Writers and readers of history interpret the evidence before them, and inevitably bring to the task their own questions, concerns, and experiences.

This edition continues the evolution of the *The Unfinished Nation* as authors John M. Giggie and Andrew J. Huebner build upon this canonical text, with a focus on making history relatable and accessible to today's students. John M. Giggie is a historian of race and religion, Andrew J. Huebner is a historian of war and society, and both more generally study and teach American social and cultural history. Their interests join and complement Alan Brinkley's expansive base of knowledge in the history of American politics, society, and culture. Alan's scholarship inspired John and Andrew as graduate students and they are honored to continue the work of *The Unfinished Nation*. They endeavor to bring their own scholarly interests and sensitivities to an already vibrant, clear, concise, and balanced survey of American history. The result, we hope, is a text that explores the great range of ideas, institutions, individuals, and events that make up the fabric of society in the United States.

It is a daunting task to attempt to convey the history of the United States in a single book, and the tenth edition of *The Unfinished Nation* has, as have all previous editions, been carefully written and edited to keep the book as concise and readable as possible. It features most notably an enlarged focus on the history of Native Americans, the experiences of enslaved peoples in the United States, the ever-shifting political landscape with its associated opportunities and challenges, the Civil War and Reconstruction periods, the struggles and successes of Black Americans since the Civil War, and dramatic political and economic change in the twenty-first century, including discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across these subjects, we recognize that to understand the full complexity of the American past it is necessary to understand both the forces that divide Americans and the forces that draw them together. Thus we've sought to explore the development of foundational ideals like democracy and equality as well as the ways that our nation's fulfillment of those ideals remains, like so much else, unfinished.

Paired with a digital assignment and assessment platform, instructors and students utilizing *The Unfinished Nation* are able to accomplish more in less time. Among other resources, the digital course offers interactive map assignments and tools to strengthen critical reading and writing skills.

AMERICA'S HISTORY IS STILL UNFOLDING

Is American History finished? Not yet! *The Unfinished Nation* shows that as more details are uncovered, dates may not change—but perceptions and reality definitely can. The United States and its history are in a constant state of change.

Just like the United States, this edition evolves, benefiting from the voices of John M. Giggie and Andrew J. Huebner, whose expertise sheds light on perspectives that shape an examination of the past. Their aim is to help students ask new questions. By doing so, students find their own answer to the question: is American History finished?

PRIMARY SOURCES HELP STUDENTS THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT HISTORY

Primary sources help students think critically about history and expose them to contrasting perspectives of key events. The Tenth Edition of *The Unfinished Nation* provides features that offer contrasting perspectives or showcase historical artifacts.

Within the print book or eBook, *The Unfinished Nation* offers the following features:

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

In every chapter, Consider the Source features guide students through careful analysis of historical documents and prompt them to closely examine the ideas expressed, as well as the historical circumstances. Among the classic sources included are Benjamin Franklin's testimony against the Stamp Act, the Emancipation Proclamation, Fannie Lou Hamer on the struggle for voting rights, and Ronald Reagan on the role of government. Concise introductions provide context, and concluding questions prompt students to understand, analyze, and evaluate each source.

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS, "OF THE ISLAND OF HISPANIOLA" (1542)

Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Dominican friar from Spain, was an early European settler of the West Indies. He devoted much of his life to describing the culture of native peoples and advocating for them against the cruelty of the hands of their colonizers. This excerpt is from a letter he addressed to Spain's Prince Philip.

God has created all these numberless people to be quite the simplest, without malice or duplicity, most obedient, most faithful to their natural Lords, and to the Christians, whom they serve, the most humble, most patient, most peaceful and calm, without strife nor tumults, not warring, nor quarrelsome, as free from uproar, hate and desire of revenge as any in the world. . . . Among these gentle sheep, gifted by their Maker with the above qualities, the Spaniards entered as soon as they knew them, like wolves, tigers and lions which had been starving for many days, and since forty years they have done nothing else, nor do they expect, torment, and destroy them with strange and new, and diverse kinds of cruelty, never before seen, nor heard of, nor read of. . . .

The Christians, with their horses and swords and lances, began to slaughter and practice strange cruelty among them. They penetrated into the country and spared not their children nor the aged, nor pregnant women, nor those who child labour, all of whom they ran through the body and lacerated, as though they were scabbing so many lambs huddled in their sheepfold. They made nets to who would slit a man in two, or cut off his head at one blow or they opened up his bowels. They tore the babies from their mothers' breasts by the feet, and dashed their heads

against the rocks. Others they seized by the shoulders and threw into the rivers, laughing and jolting, and when they fell into the water they exclaimed: "hot body of so and so!" They spitted the bodies of other babies, together with their mothers and all who were before them, on their swords.

They made a gallows just high enough for the feet to nearly touch the ground, and by thirties, in honor and reverence of our Redeemer and the twelve Apostles, they put wood underneath and, with fire, they burned the Indians alive.

They wrapped the bodies of others entirely in dry straw, binding them in it and setting fire to it; and so they burned them. They cut off the hands of all they wished to take alive, made them carry them fastened on to them, and said: "Go and carry letters"; that is, take the news to those who have fled to the mountains.

They generally killed the lords and nobles in the following way. They made wooden ordines of stakes, bound them upon them, and made a slow fire beneath; thus the victims gave up the spirit by degrees, emitting cries of despair in their torture.

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. How did Bartolomé de Las Casas characterize the indigenous people of Hispaniola? How do you think they would have responded to this description?
2. What metaphor did Las Casas use to describe the native peoples and where does this metaphor come from?
3. What role did Las Casas expect the Spaniards to play on Hispaniola? What did they do instead?

DEBATING THE PAST

Debating the Past essays introduce students to the contested quality of much of the American past and provide a sense of the evolving nature of historical scholarship. From examining specific differences in historical understandings of the Constitution, to exploring the causes of the Civil War and the significance of Watergate, these essays familiarize students with the interpretive character of historical understanding.

DEBATING THE PAST

THE DECISION TO DROP THE ATOMIC BOMB

There has been continuing disagreement since 1945 among historians—and many others—about how to explain and evaluate President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

Truman himself, both at the time and in his 1953 memoirs, insisted that the decision was a simple one. Japan was not ready to surrender in the summer of 1945. The alternative to using atomic weapons, he claimed, was an American invasion of mainland Japan that might have cost hundreds of thousands of American lives. Secretary of War Henry Stimson made the same

argument, known as the "orthodox" one, in a 1947 piece in *Harper's Magazine*. That view received considerable support from historians. Herbert Gold wrote in *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (1966) that Truman made his decision on purely military grounds—to ensure a speedy American victory.

Others strongly disagreed. As early as 1948, British physicist P. M. S. Blackett wrote in *Four, War, and the Bomb* that the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was "not so much the last military act of the second World War as the first major operation

of the cold diplomatic war with Russia." The most important "revisionist" critic of Truman's decision is the historian Gar Alperovitz, the author of two influential books on the subject: *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (1965) and *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* (1995). Alperovitz dismissed the argument that the bomb was used to shorten the war and save lives. Japan was likely to have surrendered soon even if the bomb had not been used, he claimed. Instead, he argued, the United States used the bomb less to influence Japan than for what he called "atomic diplomacy"—to intimidate the Soviet Union and "make Russia more manageable in Europe." In *A World Without War: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (1973), Martin Sherwin agreed that the bombs carried diplomatic value but also granted the orthodox position that Truman dropped them to end the war quickly.

Other critics of the Truman administration suggested that not only played a role in the decision to drop atomic weapons on Japan. These include John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1986). Ronald Takaki's *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb* (1995), and Tetsuo Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (2005). These writers contend that American visions of the Japanese as almost subhuman animated not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki but also a broader character of the war in the Pacific. But there is much disagreement within the revisionist camp. Takaki and Hasegawa concurred with Alperovitz, for instance, that anti-Soviet impulses motivated the deployment of the bomb, but they parted company over other matters, including race. Alperovitz wrote that it is "all but impossible to find specific evidence that racism was an important factor in the decision to attack Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

Orthodox scholars, in turn, restated their opposition to Alperovitz's idea of "atomic diplomacy" in the 1990s and 2000s.

with a similar charge that revisionist scholars misread the evidence or wrote before the release of important new documents. Declassified reports suggested the United States knew in 1945 that Japan was readying itself for an American invasion. Two scholars, Robert H. Farrell, in *Harry S. Truman: A Life* (1994) and Harry S. Truman and the Cold War (2006), as well as Alison I. Hanby, in *Man of the People* (1995), defended Truman's decision to drop the bomb on military grounds. They cited Japan's unwillingness to surrender and Truman's belief that an invasion would be costly, thus denying the place of atomic diplomacy in the attacks. "One consideration weighed most heavily on Truman," Hanby concluded. "The longer the war lasted, the more Americans killed." In *The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the Atomic Bomb, and the Defeat of Japan* (2011), Wilson Miscamble likewise called it a "myth" that Japan was ready to give up before Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The debate over Truman's decision to drop the bomb has generated litter and even personal exchanges, because at their heart, those exchanges pivot around a wrenching and divisive question: Were Hiroshima and Nagasaki brutal, unnecessary tragedies that killed thousands of innocent people, or terrible but justifiable acts that shortened a war and saved many thousands more? *

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. The United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Was dropping the bomb on Hiroshima necessary? Was it justified? Do the reasons for dropping the bomb on Hiroshima apply equally to the bombing of Nagasaki?
2. How might the war in the Pacific have been different if the United States had decided not to drop the bombs?



AMERICA IN THE WORLD

America in the World essays focus on specific parallels between American history and those of other nations and demonstrate the importance of the many global influences on the American story. Topics such as the global Industrial Revolution, the abolition of slavery, and the global depression of the 1930s provide concrete examples of the connections between the history of the United States and the history of other nations.

AMERICA IN THE WORLD

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The United States formally abolished slavery through the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War. But the effort to abolish slavery did not begin or end in North America. Emancipation in the United States was part of a worldwide antislavery movement that began in the late eighteenth century and continued through the end of the nineteenth.

The end of slavery, like the end of monarchies and established aristocracies, was one of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which inspired new concepts of individual freedom. As Enlightenment ideas spread throughout the Western world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, people on both sides of the Atlantic began to examine slavery anew. Many Enlightenment thinkers, including most of the founders of the American republic, believed that freedom was appropriate for white people but not for people of color. But others came to believe that all human beings had an equal claim to liberty, and their views became the basis for an escalating series of antislavery movements.

Opponents of slavery first targeted the slave trade—the sale commerce in human beings that had grown up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and had come to involve large parts of Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and North and South America. In the aftermath of the revolutions in America, France, and Haiti, the attack on the slave trade quickly gained momentum. Its central figure was the English reformer William Wilberforce, who spent years attacking Britain's connection with the slave trade on moral and religious grounds. After the Haitian Revolution, Wilberforce and other antislavery activists denounced slavery on the grounds that its continuation would create more

slave revolts. In 1807, he persuaded Parliament to pass a law ending the slave trade within the entire British Empire. The British example foreshadowed many other nations to make the slave trade illegal as well: the United States in 1808, France in 1814, Holland in 1817, Spain in 1845. Trading in enslaved people persisted within countries and colonies where slavery remained legal (including the United States), and some legal slave trading continued throughout the Atlantic World. But the institution of the end of the steady trade declined after 1807. The last known shipment of enslaved people across the Atlantic—from Africa to Cuba—occurred in 1867.

Ending the slave trade was a great deal easier than ending slavery itself, in which many people had major investments and on which much agriculture, commerce, and industry depended. But pressure to abolish more helping to lead the international outcry against the institution. In Haiti, the slave revolt that began in 1791 eventually abolished not only slavery but also French rule. In some parts of South America, slavery came to an end with the overthrow of Spanish rule in the 1820s. Simón Bolívar, the great leader of Latin American independence, considered abolishing slavery an important part of his mission, freeing those who joined his armies and insisting on constitutional prohibitions of slavery in several of the constitutions he helped frame. In 1833, the British parliament passed a law abolishing slavery in its empire in which Empire and compensated slaveholders for freeing those they held in slavery. France abolished slavery in its empire in 1848, after years of agitation from abolitionists. In the Caribbean, Spain followed



ANTISLAVERY MESSAGE The image of an enslaved man praying to God was popular in both British and American antislavery circles. It is appeared on the seal of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, a British abolitionist group formed in 1787, accompanied by the quote, "Man is not a man and a brother!" This emblem from 1801 was used by the American John Goodwin Wilberforce's antislavery poem "The Centinel in Chains."

Britain in slowly eliminating slavery from its colonies. Puerto Rico abolished slavery in 1873, and in the face of increasing slave resistance and the declining profitability of slave-based plantations, in 1886 Cuba became the last colony in the Caribbean to end slavery. Brazil was the last nation in the Americas to abolish slavery, ending the system in 1888. The Brazilian military began to turn against slavery after the valiant participation of enslaved soldiers in Brazil's war with Paraguay in the late 1860s; eventually, educated Brazilians began to oppose the system too, arguing that it obstructed economic and social progress.

In the United States, the power of moral opinion—and the example of Wilberforce's movement in England—became an important influence on the abolitionist movement as it gained strength in the 1830s. American abolitionists, in turn, helped reinforce the movements abroad. Frederick Douglass, the

formerly enslaved American turned abolitionist, became a major figure in the international antislavery movement and was a much-admired and much-quoted after speaker in England and Europe in the 1840s and 1850s. The United States was one of the last countries in the Western world to ban slavery and had to fight a four-year war with itself to do so. Its efforts, importantly, were part of a worldwide movement toward emancipation.

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. Why did opponents of slavery focus first on ending the slave trade rather than abolishing slavery itself? Why was ending the slave trade easier than ending slavery?
2. How did William Wilberforce's arguments against abolitionism, in turn, help reinforce the movements abroad. Frederick Douglass, the

PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE

Patterns of Popular Culture essays bring fads, crazes, hangouts, hobbies, and entertainment into the story of American history, encouraging students to expand their definition of what constitutes history and gain a new understanding of what popular culture reveals about a society.

PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE

TAVERNS IN REVOLUTIONARY MASSACHUSETTS

In colonial Massachusetts, as in many other American colonies in the 1760s and 1770s, taverns (or "public houses," as they were often known) were crucial to the development of popular resistance to British rule. The Puritan culture of New England created some resistance to taverns, and reformers tried to regulate or close them to reduce "public drunkenness," "foul behavior," and "lewdness." But as the commercial life of the colonies expanded and more people began living in towns and cities, taverns became a central institution in American social life—and eventually in its political life as well.

Taverns were appealing, of course, because they provided alcoholic drinks in a culture where the craving for alcohol and the extent of drunkenness were very high. But taverns had other attractions as well. They were one of the few places where people could meet and talk openly in public; indeed, many colonists considered the life of the tavern as the only vaguely democratic experience available to them. The tavern was a mostly male institution, just as political life was considered a mostly male concern. Male camaraderie and political discourse fused together out of tavern culture.

As the revolutionary crisis deepened, taverns and public became central meeting places for cultivating resistance to British policies. Educated and uneducated men alike joined in animated discussions of events. The many who could not read learned about the contents of revolutionary pamphlets from listening to tavern conversations. They could join in the discussion of the new republican ideas emerging in America by participating in tavern

celebrations of, for example, the anniversary of resistance to the Stamp Act. Those anniversaries inspired elaborate toasts in public houses throughout the colonies.

In an age before wide distribution of newspapers, taverns and tavernkeepers were important sources of information about the political and social turmoil of the time. Taverns were also the settings for political events. In 1770, for example, a report circulated through the taverns of Denver, Massachusetts, about a local man who was refusing to sell tea despite the colonial boycott. The Sons of Liberty brought the seller to the Bell Tavern and persuaded him to sign a confession and apology before a crowd of defiant men in the public room.

Almost all politicians who wanted any real contact with the public found it necessary to visit taverns in colonial Massachusetts. Samuel Adams spent considerable time in



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Taverns and Politics The London Coffee House and other taverns were centers for pre-Revolutionary social and political life in colonial Philadelphia.

the public houses of Boston, where he sought to encourage resistance to British rule while taking care to drink moderately so as not to erode his stature as a leader. His cousin John Adams, although somewhat more skeptical of taverns and more sensitive to the views they encouraged, also recognized their political value. In taverns, he once said, "baseards and legislators are frequently begotten."

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. Why were taverns so important in influencing colonists about the relationship with Britain?
2. What gathering places today serve the same purposes as taverns did in colonial America?

the verge of bankruptcy) was sitting on large stocks of tea that it could not sell in Britain. In an effort to save the company, the government passed the Tea Act of 1773, which gave the company the right to export its merchandise directly to the colonies without paying any of the regular taxes that were imposed on colonial imports. The law provided no new tax on tea, but the original Townsend duty on the commodity survived, and the East India Company was now exempt from paying it. That meant cheaper tea for consumers, which Laid North had assumed would make the law welcome among the colonists.

But resistance leaders in America argued that the law, in effect, imposed an unfair tax on American merchants, who would be undercut by the East India Company and become disadvantaged in the colonial tea trade. The colonists responded by boycotting tea. Unlike earlier protests, most of which had involved relatively small numbers of people, the tea boycott mobilized large segments of the population. It also helped link the colonists together in a common experience of mass popular protest. Particularly important to the movement were the activities of colonial women, who led the boycott. The *Daughters of Liberty*—a recently formed women's organization—proclaimed, "rather than Freedom, we'll part with our Tea."

In the last weeks of 1773, with strong popular support, some colonial leaders made plans to prevent the East India Company from landing its cargoes in Philadelphia and New York. South Carolina, they agreed it away in a public warehouse. In Boston, local dissenters staged a spectacular drama. On the evening of December 16, 1773, three companies of fifty men each, masquerading as Mohawks, went aboard three ships, broke open the tea chests, and heaved them into the harbor. As the electrifying news of the Boston Tea Party spread, colonists in other seaports staged similar acts of resistance.

Parliament retaliated in four acts of 1774, closing the port of Boston, drastically reducing the powers of self-government in Massachusetts, permitting royal officers in America to be tried for crimes in other colonies or in Great Britain, and providing for the quartering of troops by the colonies. These Coercive Acts were more widely known in America as the "Intolerable Acts."

The Coercive Acts backfired. Far from isolating Massachusetts, they made the colony a martyr in the eyes of other colonies and sparked new resistance up and down the coast. Colonial legislatures passed a series of resolves supporting Massachusetts. Women's groups mobilized to extend the boycott of British goods and to create substitutes for the tea, textiles, and other commodities they were shunning. In Edenton, North Carolina, fifty-two women signed an agreement in October 1774 declaring their "sincere adherence" to the

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13 Reasons for the American Revolution (30 min)

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PODCAST SOURCE: Stuff You Missed in History Class

EPISODE TITLE: 13 Reasons for the American Revolution

SUMMARY: "No taxation without representation" is often cited as the central grievance of the American Revolution, but it was only one of many moving parts in the bigger picture.

TOTAL PODCAST TIME: 30min

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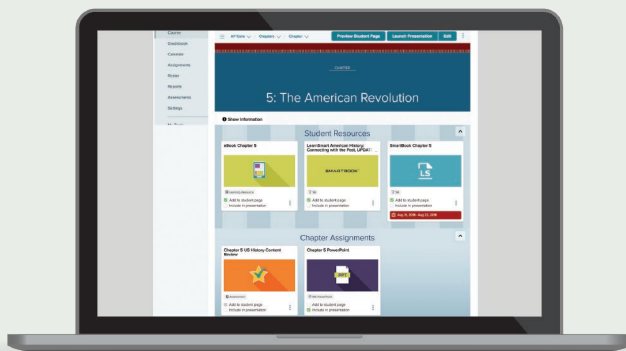
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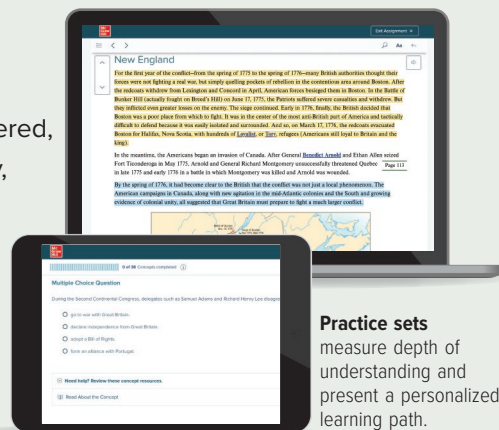
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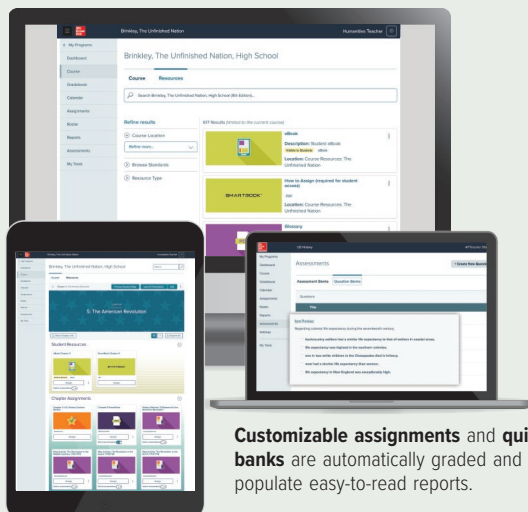
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CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER CHANGES

We have extensively revised the narrative and features in this Tenth Edition to bring in new scholarship, particularly as it relates to the experiences and perspectives of Native Americans, Black Americans, and women throughout American history. Revisions and updates in every chapter reflect the most recent scholarship as well as the advice of our panel of reviewers. Following are the major changes organized by chapter:

Chapter 1, The Collision of Cultures

- Revised content addressing political and cultural achievements of indigenous societies before the arrival of Europeans.
- Updated material on Henry Hudson's travels.

Chapter 2, Transplantations and Borderlands

- Expanded discussion of Anne Hutchinson's social role and theology.
- Revised content on William Penn and the Pennsylvania Quakers, with a focus on relationships with native peoples.
- New material on the Barbados Slave Code of 1661.

Chapter 3, Society and Culture in Provincial America

- New and revised material pertaining to early medicine in the American colonies.
- Revised material pertaining to early industry in the colonies.
- Updated discussion of the experiences of enslaved people in the Southern communities.
- Revised material on the economies and social patterns in Northern settlements, including discussion of enslaved people living in Northern colonies.
- Revised content on the religious heritage of enslaved Africans.

Chapter 4, The Empire in Transition

- Updated treatment of native resistance to European powers.
- Revised discussion of the different approaches taken by British and French colonies in North America, particularly in regards to relationships with native peoples.

Chapter 5, The American Revolution

- Updates regarding the 1619 project in the Debating the Past feature on the American Revolution.
- Revised material on the role of enslaved people in the Revolutionary War as well as the way that war affected the lives of enslaved people.

Chapter 6, The Constitution and the New Republic

This chapter features substantial reworking of the coverage of the Constitution, slavery, and the rancor of early American politics. Specific updates include

- Revised material on slavery and the Constitution, including significant revisions in the Debating the Past feature.
- Expanded discussion of the system of checks and balances.
- Revised material on the Bill of Rights.
- Revised material on Hamilton's approach to the national economy.
- New material on the emergence of a two-party system.
- Updated treatment of the Alien and Sedition Acts.

Chapter 7, The Jeffersonian Era

This chapter has been significantly revised to reflect the newest scholarship on the Jeffersonian period. Particular attention has been paid to westward expansion, violence against and dispossession of Native Americans, and the War of 1812. Other updates include

- Clarifications in discussion of the impact of the cotton gin on the slavery system.
- Expanded material on the Louisiana Purchase.

Chapter 8, Expansion and Division in the Early Republic

- Expanded discussion of the impacts of westward migration on indigenous societies during the early republican period.
- Revised material pertaining to the plantation system in the Old Southwest.
- New content on Jackson's activities during the Seminole War.
- Revised material on the Missouri Compromise.
- Updated discussion of the effect of the Marshall Court's rulings on native peoples.
- New material on the formation of the second two-party system.
- New material pertaining to the "corrupt bargain."

Chapter 9, Jacksonian America

- Expanded material on the Dorr Rebellion.
- Updated discussion in the Debating the Past feature reflecting the most recent scholarship pertaining to Jacksonian democracy.
- Significant updates and revisions pertaining to the forced removal of Native Americans during the Jackson presidency.
- Revised content on the philosophies and approaches of the Democrats and the Whigs.

Chapter 10, America's Economic Revolution

- Expanded discussion of immigration and urban growth.
- New material on the growth of the railroads.
- New material on women's early efforts to unionize.
- New material on class conflict.

Chapter 11, Cotton, Slavery, and the Old South

- Expanded and revised material on the cotton economy.
- Significantly revised material on Southern white society, including the roles of women, the class divide among white Southerners, and the commitment to slavery as the foundation of the economy.
- Significantly revised material on slavery in the American South, including updates to the Debating the Past feature to reflect recent scholarship, expanded material on the reliance on punishment as a way of managing enslaved individuals, new content on the diets and daily lives of enslaved people, and a revised discussion of the experiences of those sold through the slave trade.
- Significantly rewritten content on Black culture under slavery, with new or revised material on religion, language, song, family, and means of resistance.

Chapter 12, Antebellum Culture and Reform

- Revised discussion of the importance of the Hudson River school.
- New content on Southern writers.
- Revised material on the development, culture, and theology of the Shakers.
- Revised content on health care in the antebellum period, including new material on the racist applications of phrenology.
- Rewritten discussion of prison reform efforts.
- Updated material on early opposition to slavery.
- New and revised material on the Southern response to the abolition movement.

Chapter 13, The Impending Crisis

- Rewritten material pertaining to the concept of manifest destiny.

- Updated material on John Brown and "Bleeding Kansas."

Chapter 14, The Civil War

This chapter has been significantly rewritten and revised. Changes include

- New material reflecting latest scholarship on the question of why the South seceded
- New Consider the Source feature "Ordinances of Secession (1860/1861)."
- New material on the differences in the ways that Southerners and Northerners viewed the Civil War while it was being fought, as well as material on the way that enslaved people and free Blacks viewed the Civil War.
- Revised discussion of political changes in the North associated with the War.
- New Consider the Source feature "Letter from a Refugee (1862)."
- New Consider the Source feature "The Emancipation Proclamation (1863)."
- New and revised content on the experiences of Black soldiers who fought for the Union.
- New and revised content on women's roles during the Civil War in both the North and the South.
- New material on the political effects of the Conscription Act.
- New material on the skills, strategies, and personalities of key Southern and Northern military leaders.
- New material on the cultural and class background of Civil War soldiers in both the Union and Confederate armies.
- Updated material on the impact of military technology on Civil War battles.

Chapter 15, Reconstruction and the New South

This chapter has been significantly rewritten and revised. Changes include

- Updated content on the number of casualties caused by the Civil War.
- Clarified discussion of competing notions of freedom held by white Southerners and Black Americans.
- New material on the development of Black higher education.
- Updated and revised material on the scholarship pertaining to Reconstruction in the Debating the Past box, with a focus on the contributions of gender historians.
- New material on the significance and limitations of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- New material on Black politics during Reconstruction.

- New material on the growth and activities of the Ku Klux Klan.
- New section on the growth and cultural significance of Lost Cause mythology in the South.
- Revised treatment of the birth of Jim Crow.

Chapter 16, The Conquest of the Far West

- Revised discussion of resistance to white encroachment by native societies living west of Mississippi.
- Updated material on the impact of large-scale ranches on the economy and ecology of the Far West.
- Rewritten content on white policies toward and treatment of native peoples, including unofficial campaigns of violence.

Chapter 17, Industrial Supremacy

- Revised discussion of the role of unions.
- Refined presentation of material pertaining to sources of industrial growth.

Chapter 18, The Age of the City

This chapter has been significantly revised with substantial revisions to content on immigration and ethnicity, consumerism, labor, and urban life, and with new material on LGBTQ communities. Specific updates include

- Revised content on immigration patterns at the end of the nineteenth century.
- New material on the growth of nativism.
- New material on Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise.
- New and revised material on the creation of public space.
- New and revised content on urban poverty and philanthropic efforts to address it.
- Revised material on political machines.
- New material on anti-Semitic nature of criticism of department stores.
- New material on the homogenizing pressures of consumer society.
- New material on the growth of gay communities in urban areas.
- Revised and new content on the impact of Darwin's ideas on society.
- New and revised material on the Carlisle School.

Chapter 19, From Crisis to Empire

The chapter has been significantly updated, with a new Consider the Source feature on imperialism, along with substantial revisions on topics including: populism, party politics, imperialism, and wars in the Philippines and the Caribbean. Specific revision include

- Revised material on the party system in the late nineteenth century.
- Revised content on the Pendleton Act.
- New material on the impact of Supreme Court decisions on the Granger Laws.
- Revised America in the World feature on Imperialism.
- New material on various aspects of the Spanish American War: role of concerns about declining masculinity, hopes that the war would help Civil-War reconciliation, and experience of Black soldiers.
- New Consider the Source feature "The White Man's Burden."

Chapter 20, The Progressives

This chapter has been significantly updated, with substantial revisions to the Debating the Past feature on Progressivism and to topics including progressive ideology and politics, eugenics, woman suffrage, and race and progressivism. Specific updates include

- Revised America in the World feature on Social Democracy.
- New and revised content on the settlement house movement.
- New material on Robert la Follette and the "Wisconsin Idea."
- New material on women's roles in reform efforts.
- New material on the impact of women's WWI participation in suffrage campaign.
- Significantly revised Debating the Past feature on progressivism, reflecting current scholarship.
- New material on the National Urban League.
- New material on anti-immigration sentiments.
- New material on forced sterilization campaigns.
- New material on Theodore Roosevelt's attitude toward Native Americans.
- New material on Woodrow Wilson's embrace of white supremacy.

Chapter 21, America and the Great War

- New material on Tulsa race massacre.
- New material pertaining to American resistance to having a standing army prior to World War I.
- New content on the resistance to conscription.

Chapter 22, The New Era

- New material on the role of "welfare capitalism" in undermining unionization.
- Revised America in the World feature on the cinema.
- Updated discussion of cultural shift toward "companionate marriages."

Chapter 23, The Great Depression

- Revised material on literature and journalism during the 1930s.
- Update treatment of the Bonus Army march on Washington, D.C.

Chapter 24, The New Deal Era

- Updated Debating the Past feature on the New Deal, reflecting the latest scholarship.
- New content on the membership and political influence of the Liberty League.
- Revised material on the political and economic impact of the Revenue Acts.

Chapter 25, America in a World at War

- Updated treatment of the 1940 presidential election.
- Revised discussion of tensions between white and Mexican Americans, including the “zoot suit riots.”

Chapter 26, The Cold War

- Revised content pertaining to the political risks of supporting alternatives to communism that turn out to be corrupt or antidemocratic.
- Updated discussion on the role of the Marshall Plan in the Cold War.
- New material on longer-term impacts of WWII on the structure of the federal government.
- Expanded discussion of the railway strike of 1950.

Chapter 27, The Affluent Society

- Revised content on medical breakthroughs pertaining to the treatment of viruses, with inclusion of comparisons to COVID-19 pandemic.
- New material on the role of WWII in preparing the way for the Civil Rights movement.
- New material on the Cold War implications of the highway system.

Chapter 28, The Turbulent Sixties

- New material on the foreign-affairs focus shared by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.
- Revised Debating the Past feature, reflecting the latest scholarship, on the Civil Rights movement.
- Update material on both the Civil Rights role and political career of John Lewis.
- Revised treatment of the Black Power movement.
- Updated America in the World feature on the worldwide political events of 1968.
- Expanded material on the political impact of the Democratic Party’s embrace of Civil Rights in the American South.

Chapter 29, The Crisis of Authority

- Updated and expanded treatment of the Native American Civil Rights movement.
- Revised and expanded material the gay liberation movement.
- New material on the cultural impact of Title IX legislation.
- Updated and revised material on the political and cultural significance of the Watergate crisis.
- Significantly revised Debating the Past feature on Watergate, reflecting the latest scholarship.

Chapter 30, From “the Age of Limits” to Reaganism

- Expanded material on economic policies under President Carter.
- Revised discussion on the political impact of the growth of the Sunbelt.
- Expanded and updated material on the political and cultural effects of the tax revolt and the New Right.

Chapter 31, The Age of Globalization

This chapter has been thoroughly revised and organized according to a framework of broader themes within recent history, focusing on the rise of political polarization, the impacts of shifting population demographics, and the evolving consequences of globalization, including the global spread of disease. Specific updates include

- New material on immigration trends.
- New material on economic inequality.
- New material on the Dakota Access Pipeline.
- New material on the Black Lives Matter movement.
- New material on the Women’s March on Washington.
- New material on the Mueller investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 campaign and election.
- New material on the first Trump impeachment.
- New material on Ryan White.
- New material on LGBTQ rights.
- New material on foreign policy under Donald Trump.
- New material on North Korea.
- New material on the COVID-19 pandemic.
- New material on the election of Joseph Biden.
- New Material on the second impeachment of President Trump and the sacking of the Capitol Building by supporters unwilling to accept his loss in the presidential election to Joseph Biden.

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6

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE NEW REPUBLIC

FRAMING A NEW GOVERNMENT
ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION
FEDERALISTS AND REPUBLICANS
ESTABLISHING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY
THE DOWNFALL OF THE FEDERALISTS

LOOKING AHEAD

1. What were the most important questions debated at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and how were they resolved?
2. What were the main tenets of the Federalist and Antifederalist arguments on ratification of the Constitution?
3. What were the origins of the United State's "first party system"?

BY THE LATE 1780S, many Americans had grown dissatisfied with the Confederation. It was, they believed, ridden with factions, unable to deal effectively with economic problems, and frighteningly powerless in the face of Shays's Rebellion. A decade earlier, Americans had deliberately avoided creating a strong national government, fearing it would encroach on the sovereignty of the individual states. Now they reconsidered.

In the summer of 1787, delegates from every state except Rhode Island gathered in Philadelphia to produce a new governing document for the country. Behind closed doors, disagreements flared over how to represent the states in a new Congress, how to treat the matter of slavery, how to balance individual rights and the common good, and perhaps above all, how to share power between the federal government and the states and mitigate against dangerous aggregations of authority.

By September, the delegates had produced a new constitution that created a much more powerful government with three independent branches. The document then came in for intense debate while the states considered ratification. "Federalists" defended the Constitution and thought it properly checked both the power of the masses and the various components

of the government it created; “Antifederalists” argued it gave too much power to the federal government and worried about the rights of citizens. In 1788, the last of the nine states necessary for ratification voted to ratify, with assurances that amendments would be added to guarantee individual rights. But the adoption of the Constitution did not complete the creation of the republic, for although most people came to agree that the Constitution should guide American governance, they often disagreed on what that document meant.

FRAMING A NEW GOVERNMENT

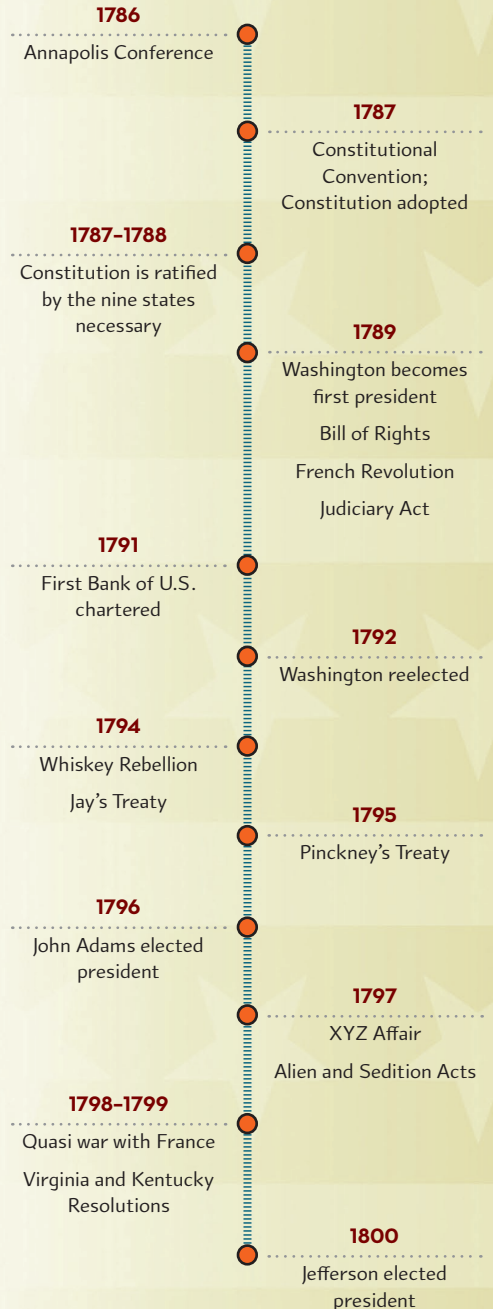
The Confederation Congress had become so unpopular and ineffectual by the mid-1780s that it began to lead an almost wail-like existence. In 1783, its members timidly withdrew from Philadelphia to escape army veterans demanding their back pay. They took refuge for a while in Princeton, New Jersey, then moved on to Annapolis, Maryland, and in 1785 settled in New York. Delegates were often scarce. Only with great difficulty could Congress produce a quorum to ratify the treaty with Great Britain, ending the Revolutionary War.

ADVOCATES OF REFORM

In the 1780s, some of the wealthiest and most powerful groups in the population began to clamor for a stronger national government. By 1786, such demands had grown so intense that even defenders of the existing system reluctantly agreed that the government needed strengthening at its weakest point—its lack of power to tax.

The most effective advocate of a stronger national government was **Alexander Hamilton**, a successful New York lawyer and illegitimate son of a Scottish merchant in the West Indies. Hamilton now called for a national

TIME LINE



convention to overhaul the Articles of Confederation. He found an important ally in James Madison of Virginia, who persuaded the Virginia legislature to convene an interstate conference on commercial questions. Only five states sent delegates to the meeting, which took place at Annapolis in 1786, but the conference approved a proposal by Hamilton for a convention of special delegates from all the states to meet in Philadelphia the next year.

At first there seemed little reason to believe the Philadelphia convention would attract any more delegates than had the Annapolis meeting. Then, early in 1787, the news of Shays's Rebellion spread throughout the nation, alarming many previously apathetic leaders, including George Washington, who promptly made plans to travel to Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention. Washington's support gave the meeting wide credibility.

A DIVIDED CONVENTION

Fifty-five men, representing all the states except Rhode Island, attended one or more sessions of the convention that sat in the Philadelphia State House from May to September 1787. These "Founding Fathers," as they became known much later, averaged forty-four years in age and were well educated by the standards of their time. Most were wealthy property owners, and many feared what one of them called the "turbulence and follies" of democracy. Yet all retained the revolutionary suspicion of concentrated power.

The convention unanimously chose Washington to preside over its sessions and closed it to the public and press. It then ruled that each state delegation would have a single vote and that major decisions would require not unanimity, as they did in Congress, but a simple majority. Almost all the delegates agreed that the United States needed a stronger central government. But there agreement ended.

Virginia, the most populous state, sent a well-prepared delegation to Philadelphia led by James Madison, who had devised in some detail a plan for a new "national" government. The Virginia Plan shaped the agenda of the convention from the moment Edmund Randolph of Virginia opened the debate by proposing that "a national government ought to be established, consisting of a supreme Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary." Even that brief description outlined a government very different from the Confederation. But the delegates were so committed to fundamental reform that they approved the resolution after only brief debate.

There was less agreement about the details of Madison's **Virginia Plan**. It called for a national legislature of two houses, with states represented in both bodies in proportion to their population. Smaller states, quite predictably, raised immediate objections. William Paterson of New Jersey offered an alternative (the **New Jersey Plan**) that would retain the essence of the Confederation with its one-house legislature in which all states had equal representation. It would, however, give Congress expanded powers to tax and to regulate commerce. The convention rejected Paterson's proposal, but supporters of the Virginia Plan now realized they would have to make concessions to the smaller states.

Many questions remained unresolved. Among the most important was the question of slavery. There was no serious discussion of abolishing slavery during the convention, but other issues were debated heatedly. Would enslaved people be counted as part of the population in determining representation in Congress, or would they be considered property and therefore not counted? Everyone wanted resolutions to these questions that would benefit their own states. Representatives from slave states argued that the enslaved should be considered persons in determining representation but as property if the new government levied taxes on the states on the basis of population. Representatives from states where slavery had disappeared or was expected to disappear argued the opposite, that the enslaved should be included in calculating taxation but not representation.

COMPROMISE

The delegates bickered for weeks. By the end of June, with both temperature and tempers rising, the convention seemed in danger of collapsing. Finally, on July 2, the convention created a “grand committee,” comprising one delegate from each state, which produced a proposal that became the basis of the “Great Compromise.” It called for a two-house legislature. In the lower House of Representatives, the states would be represented on the basis of population. Each enslaved person would be counted as three-fifths of a free person in determining the basis for both representation and direct taxation. In the upper Senate, each state, regardless of population, would be represented by two members, with those senators elected by state legislatures, not the general voting public. On July 16, 1787, the convention voted to accept the compromise.

In the next few weeks, the convention agreed to another important compromise. To placate southern delegates, who feared the new government would interfere with slavery, the convention agreed to bar the new government from stopping the importation of enslaved people for twenty years.

Some significant issues remained unaddressed. The **Constitution** provided no definition of citizenship. Nor did it resolve the status of Native American tribes. Most important to many Americans was the absence of a list of individual rights, which would restrain the powers of the national government. Madison opposed the idea, arguing that specifying rights that were reserved to the people would, in effect, limit those rights. Others, however, feared that without such protections the national government might abuse its new authority.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1787

Many people contributed to the creation of the American Constitution, but the most important person in the process was **James Madison**. Madison had devised the Virginia Plan, and he did most of the drafting of the Constitution itself. Madison’s most important achievement, however, was helping to resolve two important philosophical questions: the question of sovereignty and the question of limiting power. (For historians’ evolving views on the Constitution’s purpose, see “Debating the Past: The Meaning of the Constitution.”)

How could a national government exercise sovereignty concurrently with state governments? Where did ultimate sovereignty lie? The answer, Madison and his contemporaries decided, was that all power, at all levels of government, flowed ultimately from the people. Thus neither the federal government nor the state governments were truly sovereign. All of them derived their authority from below. The resolution of the problem of sovereignty made possible one of the distinctive features of the Constitution—its **federalism**, or division of powers between the national and state governments. The Constitution and the government it created were to be the “supreme law” of the land. At the same time, however, the Constitution left important powers in the hands of the states.

In addition to addressing the question of sovereignty, the writers of the Constitution resolved to spread authority over several centers of power. Drawing from the ideas of the French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu, the framers endeavored to prevent any single group, or tyrannical individual, from dominating the government. The Constitution provided for a **separation of powers** within the government, managed by a system of **checks and balances** among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The forces within the government would constantly check one another. Congress would have two chambers, each constraining the other, since both would have to agree before any law could be passed. The president would have the power to veto acts of Congress, but Congress could override those vetoes and also check the

THE MEANING OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the United States inspired debate from the moment it was drafted. Some argue that the Constitution is a flexible document intended to evolve in response to society's evolution. Others counter that it has a fixed meaning, rooted in the "original intent" of the framers, and that to move beyond that is to deny its value.

Historians, too, disagree about why the Constitution was written and what it meant. To some scholars, the creation of the federal system was an effort to preserve the ideals of the Revolution and to create a strong national government capable of exercising real authority. To others, the Constitution was an effort to protect the economic interests of existing elites, even at the cost of betraying the principles of the Revolution. And to still others, the Constitution was designed to protect individual freedom and to limit the power of the federal government.

The first influential exponent of the heroic view of the Constitution as the culmination of the Revolution was John Fiske, whose book *The Critical Period of American History* (1888) painted a grim picture of political life under the Articles of Confederation. Many problems, including economic difficulties, the weakness and ineptitude of the national government, threats from abroad, interstate jealousies, and widespread lawlessness, beset the new nation. Fiske argued that only the timely adoption of the Constitution saved the young republic from disaster.

In *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913), Charles A. Beard presented a powerful challenge to Fiske's view. According to Beard, the 1780s had been a "critical period" primarily for conservative business interests who feared that the decentralized political structure of

the republic imperiled their financial position. Such men, he claimed, wanted a government able to promote industry and trade, protect private property, and perhaps, most of all, make good the public debt—much of which was owed to them. The Constitution was, Beard claimed, "an economic document drawn with superb skill by men whose property interests were immediately at stake" and who won its ratification over the opposition of a majority of the people.

A series of powerful challenges to Beard's thesis emerged in the 1950s. The Constitution, many scholars now began to argue, was not an effort to preserve property but an enlightened effort to ensure stability and order. Robert E. Brown, for example, argued in 1956 that "absolutely no correlation" could be shown between the wealth of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention and their position on the Constitution. Examining the debate between the Federalists and the Antifederalists, Forrest McDonald, in *We the People* (1958), also concluded that there was no consistent relationship between wealth and property and support for the Constitution. Instead, opinion on the new system was far more likely to reflect local and regional interests. These challenges greatly weakened Beard's argument. Few historians any longer accept his thesis without reservation.

In the 1960s, scholars began again to revive an economic interpretation of the Constitution—one that differed from Beard's but nevertheless emphasized social and economic factors as motives for supporting the federal system. Jackson Turner Main argued in *The Anti-federalists* (1961) that supporters of the Constitution were "cosmopolitan commercialists," eager to advance the economic development of the

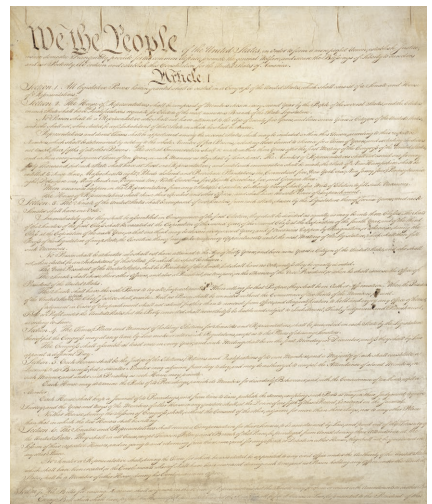
nation; the Antifederalists, by contrast, were “agrarian localists,” fearful of centralization. Gordon Wood, in *The Creation of the American Republic* (1969), suggested that the debate over the state constitutions in the 1770s and 1780s reflected profound social divisions and that those same divisions helped shape the argument over the federal Constitution. The Federalists, Wood suggested, were largely traditional aristocrats who had become deeply concerned by the instability of life under the Articles of Confederation and were particularly alarmed by the decline in popular deference toward social elites. The creation of the Constitution was part of a larger search to create a legitimate political leadership based on the existing social hierarchy. It reflected the efforts of elites to contain what they considered the excesses of democracy.

More recently, historians have continued to examine the question of “intent.” Did the framers intend a strong, centralized political system; or did they intend to create a decentralized system with a heavy emphasis on individual rights? The answer, according to Jack Rakove in *Original Meanings* (1996), and *Revolutionaries* (2010), is both—and many other things as well. The Constitution, he argues, was the result of a long and vigorous debate through which the views of many different groups found their way into the document. James Madison, generally known as the father of the Constitution, was a strong nationalist, as was Alexander Hamilton. They believed that only a powerful central government could preserve stability in a large nation, and they saw the Constitution as a way to protect order and property and defend the nation against the dangers of too much liberty. But if Madison and Hamilton feared too much liberty, they also feared too little. And that made them receptive to the demands of the Antifederalists for protections of individual rights, which culminated in the Bill of Rights. The very “middling sorts” who had exercised more and more power since 1776, scaring many conservative founders, also

helped push for such citizen rights, Woody Holton argues in *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (2007).

Just as crucially, what did the framers intend regarding slavery? On one side of a debate that rather parallels the one over the meaning of the Revolution, some scholars maintain that the Constitution may not have called for an immediate end to human bondage, but that it ultimately laid the groundwork for slavery’s destruction. They point, for instance, to the failure of the Constitution to mention slavery, and to Frederick Douglass’s speech in 1852 declaring the Constitution a “glorious liberty document,” that, if properly understood, offered no explicit succor to slavery. Sean Wilentz argues in *No Property in Man: Slavery and Antislavery at the Nation’s Founding* (2018) that the Constitution contained both pro- and antislavery components, but that ultimately the framers refused to sanction the institution with explicit protections.

Yet other scholars find this picture too celebratory, arguing that it downplays the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. While granting that concessions were made to antislavery voices at the convention, many historians agree with the views of David Waldstreicher in *Slavery’s Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (2009) and George



(National Archives and Records Administration)

William Van Cleve in *A Slaveholder's Union: Slavery, Politics, and the Constitution in the Early American Republic* (2010). Even if the Constitution withheld specific rhetorical sanction for the idea of “property in man,” it rewarded slaveholders with potentially escalating political representation for holding human beings in bondage, allowed the slave trade to continue and in fact flourish by pledging not to terminate it for at least twenty years, and extended various other economic and legal protections for the institution, such as mandating the return of fugitive enslaved people to slaveholders. In Waldstreicher’s words, “In growing their government, the framers and their constituents created fundamental laws that sustained human bondage.”

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. Is the Constitution a conservative, liberal, or radical document?
2. Did the framers consider the Constitution something “finished” (with the exception of constitutional amendments), or did they consider it a document that would evolve in response to changes in society over time?
3. Which parts of the Constitution suggest that the framers’ intent was to create a strong, centralized political system? Which parts suggest that the framers’ intent was to create a decentralized system with heavy emphasis on individual rights?

executive through impeachment. The judiciary would monitor the constitutionality of laws and orders coming from the executive and legislative branches. Federal courts would be protected from both of those entities, because judges would serve for life, but the executive would appoint federal judges in the first place and the legislature would confirm them.

The “federal” structure of the government was designed to protect the United States from the kind of despotism that Americans believed had emerged in Britain. Framers of the Constitution wanted a stronger central government, but one not *too* strong. Likewise, they wanted a government representative of and answerable to the popular will, but not *too* much so. Many of them harbored limited trust in the abilities of citizens to put the common good before their individual needs, and pointed to Shays’s Rebellion as recent evidence of popular power run amok. Thus in the new government, only the members of the House of Representatives would be elected directly by the people. Senators would be chosen by state legislatures. The president would be chosen by an electoral college, with each state promoting electors to that body however it saw fit but equal to the total number of the state’s members of Congress (Senate plus House). No requirement was written into the Constitution that these electors cast their ballots for president and vice president according to the popular will in their states, though that later became the accepted practice when states began recording a popular vote.

On September 17, 1787, thirty-nine delegates signed the Constitution. The document established a democratic republic that would be governed by white men. The framers did not explicitly define **citizenship**—the legal recognition of a person’s inclusion in a body politic through the granting of rights and privileges—but common wisdom and jurisprudence held that birth in the United States and whiteness made one a citizen. Congress made this explicit for immigrants with the Naturalization Act of 1790, which helped legalize the stream of newcomers and allowed them to become citizens—provided they were “free white person[s].”

States were left to adjudicate the particulars of citizenship and suffrage rights, but in general they reserved that status for white people and those privileges for white male property owners. New Jersey allowed propertied white women to vote, but brought its suffrage laws into line with those of the other (male suffrage only) states in 1807. A few states

would extend citizenship and suffrage rights to free Blacks, and free Blacks in South Carolina and North Carolina petitioned their state legislature and the U.S. Congress in 1791 and 1797, respectively, for some of the protections afforded white people by the Constitution. Both attempts met rejection, and indeed, Black citizenship at the state level was not the norm. They were not, one southern official noted, “constituent members of our society.”

Thomas Jefferson worried about excluding “a whole race of men” from the natural rights he had done much to promote. But he could never accept the idea that Black men and women could attain the level of knowledge and intelligence of white people, despite an intimate relationship with a Black woman, Sally Hemings, whom Jefferson enslaved on his Virginia plantation. He fathered children with her, yet he did not change his position on slavery. Unlike George Washington, who freed his enslaved persons after his death, Jefferson (deeply in debt) required his heirs to sell his enslaved workers upon his death, after liberating a few members of the Hemings family.

Jefferson did profess to believe Native Americans could be taught the ways of “civilization” and live as white Americans did. And indigenous groups had at least the semblance of a legal status within the nation, through treaties that assured them of land possession. But most of these treaties did not survive for long, and native groups found themselves driven farther and farther west without very much of the protection the government had promised. Efforts to teach Anglo farming methods, whereby men did the farming and women cared for the home, clashed with Native American practices and traditions.

Thus indigenous groups, African Americans, and women enjoyed virtually none of the citizenship rights offered to the white male population. It was not until 1868 that the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed people of color born in the United States the status, if not yet the privileges, of citizenship. Native Americans were not granted birthright citizenship in the United States until the 1920s. And though some states passed woman suffrage laws in the late nineteenth century, it wasn’t until 1920 that women secured ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, giving them the ballot throughout the nation.

ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION

The delegates at Philadelphia had greatly exceeded their instructions from Congress and the states. Instead of making simple revisions to the Articles of Confederation, they had produced a plan for a completely different form of government. They feared that the Constitution would not be ratified under the rules of the Articles of Confederation, which required unanimous approval by the state legislatures. So the convention changed the rules, proposing that the new government would come into being when nine of the thirteen states ratified the Constitution and recommending that state conventions, not state legislatures, be called to ratify it.

FEDERALISTS AND ANTIFEDERALISTS

The Congress in New York accepted the convention’s work and submitted it to the states for approval. All the state legislatures except Rhode Island elected delegates to ratifying conventions, most of which began meeting in early 1788. Even before the ratifying conventions convened, however, a great national debate on the new Constitution had begun.

Supporters of the Constitution had a number of advantages. Better organized than their opponents, they seized an appealing label for themselves: **Federalists**—a term that opponents of centralization had once used to describe themselves—thus implying that they were less committed to a “nationalist” government than in fact they were. In addition, the Federalists had

the support of not only the two most eminent men in the United States, Ben Franklin and George Washington, but also the ablest political philosophers of their time: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. Under the joint pseudonym *Publius*, these three men wrote a series of essays, widely published in newspapers throughout the nation (Federalists largely controlled the press), explaining the meaning and virtues of the Constitution. The essays were later gathered together and published as a book known today as *The Federalist Papers*. In just one example, the papers defended the controversial “necessary and proper” clause of the Constitution, an important measure that gave Congress sweeping authority to make laws “necessary and proper” to executing the federal government’s authority. The *states*, not Congress, had been given that sort of incidental power by the outgoing Articles of Confederation.

The Federalists called their critics “**Antifederalists**,” suggesting that their rivals had nothing to offer except opposition. But the Antifederalists, led by such distinguished revolutionary leaders as Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, believed themselves to be defenders of the Revolution’s true principles. They argued that the Constitution would increase taxes, weaken the states, grant the central government dictatorial powers, favor the “well-born” over the common people, and abolish individual liberty. Antifederalists found the necessary and proper clause a particularly frightening transfer of powers not expressly “delegated” by the Constitution from the states to the federal government. But their biggest complaint was that the Constitution lacked a bill of rights. Only by enumerating the natural rights of the people, they argued, could there be any certainty that those rights would be protected.

Despite the efforts of the Antifederalists, ratification proceeded quickly during the winter of 1787–1788. The Delaware convention, the first to act, ratified the Constitution unanimously, as did conventions in New Jersey and Georgia. And in June 1788, New Hampshire, the critical ninth state, ratified the document. It was now theoretically possible for the Constitution to go into effect. But a new government could not hope to succeed without Virginia and New York, the largest states, whose conventions remained closely divided. By the end of June, first Virginia and then New York consented to the Constitution by narrow margins and on the assumption that a bill of rights would be added in the form of amendments to the Constitution. North Carolina’s convention adjourned without taking action, waiting to see what happened with the amendments. Rhode Island, controlled by staunch opponents of centralized government, did not even consider ratification.

COMPLETING THE STRUCTURE

The first elections under the Constitution were held in the early months of 1789. There was never any doubt about who would be the first president. George Washington had presided at the Constitutional Convention, and many who had favored ratification did so only because they expected him to preside over the new government as well. Washington received the votes of all the presidential electors, and almost all of the “popular vote,” which in this first presidential election incorporated only a tiny percentage even of adult white males. **John Adams**, a leading Federalist, came in second to Washington and thereby became vice president. After a journey from his estate at Mount Vernon, Virginia, marked by elaborate celebrations along the way, Washington was inaugurated in New York on April 30, 1789.

The first Congress served in many ways as a continuation of the Constitutional Convention. Its most important task was drafting a bill of rights. By early 1789, even Madison had come to agree that some such bill would be essential to legitimizing the new government. On September 25, 1789, Congress approved twelve amendments, ten of which were ratified by the states by the end of 1791. These first ten amendments to the Constitution comprise what we know as the **Bill of Rights**. Nine of them placed limitations on the new government by forbidding it to infringe on certain fundamental rights: freedom of religion, speech,



(Image courtesy National Gallery of Art)

GEORGE WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON Washington was in his first term as president in 1790 when an anonymous folk artist painted this view of his home at Mount Vernon, Virginia. Washington appears in uniform, along with members of his family, on the lawn. After he retired from office in 1797, Washington returned happily to his plantation and spent the two years before his death in 1799 “amusing myself in agricultural and rural pursuits.” He also played host to an endless stream of visitors from throughout the country and Europe.

and the press; immunity from arbitrary arrest; trial by jury, and others. The amendments contained language, such as the prohibition of “cruel and unusual punishment,” that would remain open to interpretation and jurisprudence for generations.

Provisions for the judiciary branch were even more vague. The Constitution said only: “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.” It was left to Congress to determine the number of Supreme Court judges to be appointed and the kinds of lower courts to be organized. In the Judiciary Act of 1789, Congress provided for a Supreme Court of six members and a system of lower district courts and courts of appeal. It also gave the Supreme Court the power to make the final decision in cases involving the constitutionality of state laws.

The Constitution also said little about the organization of the executive branch. It referred indirectly to executive departments but did not specify which ones or how many there should be. The first Congress created three such departments—state, treasury, and war—and also established the offices of the attorney general and postmaster general. To the office of secretary of the treasury, Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton of New York. For secretary of war, he chose a Massachusetts Federalist, General Henry Knox. He named Edmund Randolph of Virginia as attorney general and chose another Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, for secretary of state.

FEDERALISTS AND REPUBLICANS

The framers of the Constitution had dealt with many controversies by papering them over with a series of vague compromises. As a result, the disagreements survived to plague the new government.

At the heart of the controversies of the 1790s was the same basic difference in philosophy that had fueled the debate over the Constitution. On one side stood a powerful group who envisioned the United States as a genuine nation-state, with centralized authority and a complex commercial economy. On the other side stood thinkers who envisioned a more

modest national government. Rather than aspire to be a highly commercial or urban nation, they believed the new nation should remain predominantly rural and agrarian. The centralizers became known as the Federalists and gravitated to the leadership of Alexander Hamilton. Their opponents acquired the name **Republicans** and admired the views of Thomas Jefferson as well as James Madison, who grew skeptical of Federalist rule.

HAMILTON AND THE FEDERALISTS

For twelve years, the Federalists retained firm control over the new government. That was in part because George Washington had always envisioned a strong national government. But the president, Washington believed, should stand above political controversies, and so he avoided personal involvement in the deliberations of Congress. As a result, the dominant figure in his administration became Alexander Hamilton. Of all the national leaders of his time, Hamilton was one of the most aristocratic in his political philosophy. He believed a stable and effective government required an elite ruling class. Thus the new government needed the support of the wealthy and powerful, and to get that, it needed to give elites a stake in its success.

Hamilton proposed, therefore, that the existing public debt be “funded.” This meant that the various certificates of indebtedness that the old Congress had issued during and after the Revolution—many of them now in the possession of wealthy speculators—be called in and exchanged for interest-bearing bonds. He also recommended that the states’ revolutionary debts be “assumed” (taken over) to cause state bondholders to look to the central government for eventual payment. Hamilton wanted to create a permanent national debt, with new bonds being issued as old ones were paid off. He hoped to motivate the wealthy classes, who were the most likely to lend money to, and therefore perpetually support, the survival of the federal state. But Hamilton additionally believed that centralizing and assuming debt in this way would avoid defaulting on old debts and therefore lend the United States credibility on the global economic stage.

Hamilton also wanted to create a national bank. It would provide loans and currency to businesses, give the government a safe place for the deposit of federal funds, facilitate the collection of taxes and the disbursement of the government’s expenditures, and provide a stable center to the nation’s small and feeble banking system. The bank would be chartered by the federal government, but much of its capital would come from private investors.

The funding and assumption of debts would require new sources of revenue. Hamilton recommended two kinds of taxes to complement the receipts anticipated from the sales of public land. One was an excise tax on alcoholic beverages, a tax that would be most burdensome to the whiskey distillers of the backcountry, small farmers who converted part of their corn and rye crops into whiskey. The other was a tariff on imports, which Hamilton saw not only as a source of revenue but also as a way to protect domestic industries from foreign competition. In his famous “Report on Manufactures” of 1791, he outlined a plan for stimulating the growth of industry and spoke glowingly of the advantages to society of a healthy manufacturing sector.

The Federalists, in short, offered more than a plan for a stable new government. They offered a vision of the sort of nation the United Nations should become—a nation with a wealthy, enlightened ruling class; a vigorous, independent commercial economy; and a thriving manufacturing sector.

ENACTING THE FEDERALIST PROGRAM

Few members of Congress objected to Hamilton’s plan for funding the national debt, but many did oppose his proposal to exchange new bonds for old certificates of indebtedness on a

dollar-for-dollar basis. Many of the original holders had been forced to sell during the hard times of the 1780s to speculators, who had bought them at a fraction of their face value. James Madison, now a House representative from Virginia, argued for a plan by which the new bonds would be divided between the original purchasers and the speculators. But Hamilton's allies insisted that the honor of the government required a literal fulfillment of its earlier promises to pay whoever held the bonds. Congress finally passed the funding bill Hamilton wanted.

Hamilton's proposal that the federal government assume state debts encountered greater difficulty. Its opponents argued that if the federal government took over the state debts, the states with small debts would have to pay taxes to service the states with large ones. Massachusetts, for example, owed much more money than did Virginia. Only by striking a bargain with the Virginians were Hamilton and his supporters able to win passage of the assumption bill.

The deal involved the location of the national capital, which the Virginians wanted near them in the South. Hamilton and Jefferson met and agreed to exchange northern support for placing the capital in the South for Virginia's votes for the assumption bill. The bargain called for the construction of a new capital city on the banks of the Potomac River, which divided Maryland and Virginia, on land to be selected by George Washington.

As for Hamilton's bank bill, Madison, Jefferson, Randolph, and others argued that because the Constitution made no provision for a national bank, Congress had no authority to create one. But Congress agreed to Hamilton's bill despite these objections, and Washington signed it. The Bank of the United States began operations in 1791.

Hamilton also had his way with the excise tax, although protests from farmers later forced revisions to reduce the burden on smaller distillers. He failed to win passage of a tariff as highly protective as he had hoped for, but the tariff law of 1792 did raise the rates somewhat.

Once enacted, Hamilton's program won the support of manufacturers, creditors, and other influential segments of the population. But others found it less appealing. Small farmers complained they were being taxed excessively. They and others began to argue that the Federalist program served the interests of a small number of wealthy elites rather than the people at large. From these sentiments, an organized political opposition arose.

THE REPUBLICAN OPPOSITION

The Constitution made no reference to political parties. Most of the framers believed that organized parties were dangerous "factions" to be avoided. Disagreement was inevitable on particular issues, but they believed that such disagreements need not and should not lead to the formation of permanent factions.

Yet not many years had passed after the ratification of the Constitution before Madison and others became convinced that Hamilton and his followers had become dangerous and self-interested. The Federalists had used the powers of their offices to reward their supporters and win additional allies. They were doing many of the same things, their opponents believed, that British governments of the early eighteenth century had done.

Because the Federalists appeared to their critics so menacing and tyrannical, there was no alternative but to organize a vigorous opposition. The result was the emergence of an alternative political organization, whose members ultimately called themselves "Democratic-Republicans" or just Republicans. (These first Republicans are not institutionally related to the modern Republican Party, which was created in the 1850s.) By the late 1790s, Republicans were going to even greater lengths than Federalists to create vehicles of partisan influence. In every state they formed committees, societies, and caucuses. Republican groups banded together to influence state and local elections. Neither side was willing to admit that it was acting as a party, nor would either concede the right of the other to exist. This institutionalized factionalism is known to historians as the "first party system."



(Image courtesy National Gallery of Art)

THE JEFFERSONIAN IDYLL American artists in the early nineteenth century were drawn to tranquil rural scenes, symbolic of the Jeffersonian vision of a nation of small, independent farmers. By 1822, when Francis Alexander painted *Ralph Wheelock's Farm*, the simple agrarian republic was already being transformed by rapid economic growth.

From the beginning, the preeminent figures among the Republicans were Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Jefferson, the most prominent spokesman for the cause, promoted a vision of an agrarian republic in which most citizens would farm their own land. Jefferson did not scorn commercial or industrial activity. But he believed that the nation should be wary of too much urbanization and industrialization.

Although both parties had supporters across the country and among all classes, there were regional and economic differences. Federalists were most numerous in the commercial centers of the Northeast and in such southern seaports as Charleston. Republicans were stronger in rural areas of the South and West. The difference in their philosophies was visible in, among other things, their reactions to the progress of the French Revolution. As that revolution grew increasingly radical in the 1790s, the Federalists expressed horror. But the Republicans applauded the democratic, anti-aristocratic spirit they believed the French Revolution embodied.

When the time came for the nation's second presidential election, in 1792, both Jefferson and Hamilton urged Washington to run for a second term. The president reluctantly agreed. But while Washington had the respect of both factions, he was, in reality, more sympathetic to the Federalists than the Republicans.

ESTABLISHING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

The Federalists consolidated their position by exerting effective and sometimes brutal control over the western territories and by their management of international diplomacy.

SECURING THE WEST

Despite the Northwest Ordinance, the old Congress had largely failed to tie the outlying western areas of the country firmly to the national government. Farmers in western Massachusetts had rebelled. Settlers in Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee had flirted with seceding from the Union. At first, the new government under the Constitution faced similar problems.

In 1794, farmers in western Pennsylvania raised a major challenge to federal authority when they refused to pay the new whiskey excise tax and began terrorizing tax collectors in the region. But the federal government did not leave settlement of the so-called **Whiskey Rebellion** to the authorities of Pennsylvania. At Hamilton's urging, Washington called out the militias of three states and assembled an army of nearly 15,000, and he personally led the troops into Pennsylvania. At the approach of the militiamen, the rebellion quickly collapsed.

The federal government won the allegiance of the whiskey rebels through intimidation. It secured the loyalties of other western people by accepting new states as members of the Union. The last two of the original thirteen colonies joined the Union once the Bill of Rights had been appended to the Constitution—North Carolina in 1789 and Rhode Island in 1790. Vermont became the fourteenth state in 1791, after New York and New Hampshire agreed to give up their rights to it. Next came Kentucky, in 1792, when Virginia relinquished its claim to that region. After North Carolina ceded its western lands to the Union, Tennessee became a state in 1796.

The new government faced a greater challenge in more distant areas of the Northwest and the Southwest. The ordinances of 1784–1787, establishing the terms of white settlement in the West, had produced a series of border conflicts with indigenous peoples. The new government inherited these tensions, which continued with few interruptions for nearly a decade.

Such clashes revealed another issue the Constitution had done little to resolve: the place of Native Americans within the new federal structure. The Constitution gave Congress power to “regulate Commerce . . . with the Indian tribes.” And it bound the new government to respect treaty agreements negotiated by the Confederation, most of which had been struck with indigenous representatives. But none of this did very much to clarify the precise legal standing of Native Americans within the United States. The nations received no direct representation in the new government. Above all, the Constitution did not address the major issue of land. Native Americans lived within the boundaries of the United States, yet they claimed (and the white government at times agreed) that they had some measure of sovereignty over their own land. But neither the Constitution nor common law offered any clear guide to the rights of a “nation within a nation” or to the precise nature of indigenous sovereignty.

MAINTAINING NEUTRALITY

A crisis in Anglo-American relations emerged in 1793, when the revolutionary French government went to war with Great Britain. Both the president and Congress took steps to establish American neutrality in the conflict, but that neutrality was severely tested.

Early in 1794, the Royal Navy began seizing hundreds of American ships engaged in trade in the French West Indies. Hamilton was deeply concerned. War would mean an end to imports from Britain, and most of the revenue for maintaining his financial system came from duties on those imports. Hamilton and the Federalists did not trust the State Department, now in the hands of the ardently pro-French Edmund Randolph, to find a solution to the crisis. So they persuaded Washington to name a special commissioner—the chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay—to go to England and negotiate a solution. Jay was instructed to secure compensation for the recent British assaults on American shipping, to demand withdrawal of British forces from their posts on the frontier of the United States, and to negotiate a commercial treaty with Britain.

The long and complex treaty Jay negotiated in 1794 failed to achieve all these goals. But it settled the conflict with Britain, avoiding a likely war. It provided for undisputed

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS, *AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER*, SEPTEMBER 19, 1796

In this open letter to the American people, drafted by James Madison in 1792 and later revised with the aid of Alexander Hamilton, President Washington defended the young Constitution and warned against disunity among the nation's various states and political factions. Here he cautions citizens about another threat to the republic—entangling engagements abroad.

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct. And can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. . . .

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded, and that, in place of them just and amicable feelings toward all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. The nation prompted by ill will and resentment sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject. . . .

So, likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real

common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification. . . .

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak toward a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. . . .

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relation to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have no, or a very remote, relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient

government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it. For let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim of less applicable to public than to private affairs that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to

temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand, neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; . . . constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE, & EVALUATE

1. What advice did George Washington offer on foreign policy?
2. Did Washington advocate the complete isolation of the United States from Europe? Explain.
3. How did Washington characterize Europe? What circumstances of the 1790s may have inspired this assessment?

Source: www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.htm.

American sovereignty over the entire Northwest and produced a reasonably satisfactory commercial relationship. Nevertheless, when the terms became known in the United States, criticism was intense. Opponents of the treaty—Jeffersonian Republicans fearful that economic ties to Britain would fund and strengthen the Federalist agenda—went to great lengths to defeat it. But in the end the Senate ratified what was by then known as **Jay's Treaty**.

Jay's Treaty paved the way for a settlement of important American disputes with Spain. Under **Pinckney's Treaty** (negotiated by Thomas Pinckney and signed in 1795), Spain recognized the right of Americans to navigate the Mississippi to its mouth and to deposit goods at New Orleans for reloading on oceangoing ships; agreed to fix the northern boundary of Florida along the 31st parallel; and commanded its authorities to prevent Native Americans in Florida from launching raids north across that border. (For President Washington's views on such matters of foreign policy, see "Consider the Source: Washington's Farewell Address.")

THE DOWNFALL OF THE FEDERALISTS

Almost everyone in the 1790s agreed there was no place in a stable republic for organized parties. So to the Federalists, the emergence of the Republicans as a powerful and apparently permanent opposition seemed a grave threat to national stability and to what they considered the ideals of the Revolution. The Republicans, in turn, viewed the Federalists as pro-British monarchists who would undo their vision of what the Revolution had meant. It was through this prism of hostility and suspicion that both sides regarded the international perils that confronted the government in the 1790s. The success and sustainability of the Revolution, and even the survival of the new nation, seemed at stake to Republicans and Federalists alike. And so it was that Hamilton and his followers moved forcefully against what they considered dangerous and illegitimate dissent.

THE ELECTION OF 1796

George Washington refused to run for a third term as president in 1796. Jefferson was the obvious presidential candidate of the Republicans that year, but the Federalists faced a more difficult choice. Hamilton had created too many enemies to be a credible candidate. Vice President John Adams, who was not directly associated with any of the controversial Federalist achievements, received the party's nomination for president at a caucus of Federalists in Congress.

The Federalists were still clearly the dominant party. But without Washington to mediate, they fell victim to fierce factional rivalries. Adams defeated Jefferson by only three electoral votes and assumed the presidency as head of a divided party facing a powerful opposition. Jefferson became vice president by finishing second. (Not until the adoption of the Twelfth Amendment in 1804 did electors vote separately for president and vice president.)

THE QUASI WAR WITH FRANCE

American relations with Great Britain and Spain improved as a result of Jay's and Pinckney's treaties. But the nation's relations with revolutionary France quickly deteriorated. French vessels captured American ships on the high seas. The French government refused to receive Charles Cotesworth Pinckney when he arrived in Paris as the new American minister. In an effort to stabilize relations, Adams appointed a bipartisan commission to negotiate with France. When the Americans arrived in Paris in 1797, three agents of the French foreign minister, Prince Talleyrand, demanded a loan for France and a bribe for French officials before any negotiations could begin. Pinckney, a member of the commission, responded, "No! No! Not a sixpence!"

Even when Adams heard of the failure of diplomacy, he remained reluctant to go to war. Under pressure from Congress, including Federalists eager to fight the French, he sent that body the commissioners' report, though not before deleting the names of the three French agents and designated them only as Messrs. X, Y, and Z. When the report was published, the "XYZ Affair," as it quickly became known, provoked widespread popular outrage at France's actions and strong popular support for the Federalists' response. For nearly two years, 1798 and 1799, the United States found itself engaged in a **quasi war** with France.

Adams never asked for a declaration of war, but Congress passed measures cutting off all trade with France, nullifying the Treaty of Alliance of 1778, authorizing American vessels to capture French armed ships, and creating the Department of the Navy. The new maritime force soon won a number of battles and captured a total of eighty-five French ships. The United States also began cooperating closely with the British. At last, the French began trying to conciliate the United States. Adams sent another commission to Paris in 1800, and the new French government (headed now by “First Consul” Napoleon Bonaparte) agreed to a treaty with the United States that canceled the old agreements of 1778 and established new commercial arrangements. As a result, the “war” came to a reasonably peaceful end.

REPRESSION AND PROTEST

The conflict with France helped the Federalists increase their majorities in Congress in 1798. They now began to consider ways to silence the Republican opposition. The result was some of the most controversial legislation in American history: a series of measures known collectively as the **Alien and Sedition Acts**.

The Naturalization Act placed new obstacles in the way of foreigners who wished to become American citizens, a move designed by the Federalists to deprive the Republicans of voters. The Alien Friends Act and Alien Enemies Act empowered the president to imprison and deport immigrants considered to be plotting against the government. The Sedition Act allowed the government to prosecute citizens who engaged in “sedition” against the government. In theory, only libelous or treasonous activities were subject to prosecution, but since such activities had no clear definition, the law, in effect, criminalized opposition against the state. The Republicans interpreted the new laws, quite reasonably, as part of a Federalist campaign to destroy them.

President Adams signed the new laws. He may have been cautious in implementing them, declining to deport any aliens, for instance, but the laws nonetheless collectively imagined the Republicans as internal, disloyal enemies of the state. The Alien and Sedition Acts discouraged immigration, encouraged some foreigners already in the country to leave, and chilled dissent. And the administration used them to arrest and convict ten men, most of them Republican newspaper editors whose only crime had been criticism of Federalists in government.

Republican leaders contemplated ways to reverse the Alien and Sedition Acts. Some looked to the state legislatures for help. They solidified a theory to justify action by the states against the federal government in two sets of resolutions of 1798–1799, one written (anonymously) by Jefferson and adopted by the Kentucky legislature, and the other drafted by Madison and approved by the Virginia legislature. The **Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions**, as they were known, relied on the ideas of John Locke and the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which gave to the states powers not explicitly granted to the federal government. They argued that the federal government had been formed by a “compact,” or contract, among the states and possessed only certain delegated powers. Whenever a state decided that the central government had exceeded those powers, it had the right to “nullify” the laws in question.

The Republicans did not win wide support for the nullification idea. They did, however, succeed in elevating their dispute with the Federalists to the level of a national crisis. By the late 1790s, the entire nation was deeply and bitterly politicized. State legislatures at times resembled battlegrounds. Even the U.S. Congress was plagued with violent



(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-ppmsca-31832])

CONGRESSIONAL BRAWLERS, 1798 This cartoon was inspired by the celebrated fight on the floor of the House of Representatives between Matthew Lyon, a Republican representative from Vermont, and Roger Griswold, a Federalist from Connecticut. Griswold (at right) attacks Lyon with his cane, and Lyon retaliates with fire tongs. Other members of Congress are portrayed enjoying the battle.

disagreements. In one celebrated incident in the chamber of the House of Representatives, Matthew Lyon, a Republican from Vermont, responded to an insult from Roger Griswold, a Federalist from Connecticut, by spitting on Griswold. When Griswold later attacked Lyon with his cane, Lyon fought back with a pair of fire tongs, and soon the two men were wrestling on the floor. Several months later, Lyon was found guilty of violating the Sedition Act, but still managed re-election from his prison cell.

THE “REVOLUTION” OF 1800

These bitter controversies shaped the presidential election of 1800. The presidential candidates were the same as four years earlier: Adams for the Federalists, Jefferson for the Republicans. But the campaign of 1800 was very different from the prior one. Adams and Jefferson themselves displayed reasonable dignity, but their supporters showed no such restraint. The Federalists accused Jefferson and his followers of dangerous radicalism, men whom if so empowered would bring on a reign of terror comparable to that of the French Revolution. The Republicans portrayed Adams as a tyrant conspiring to become king, accusing the Federalists of plotting to impose a kind of monarchical authoritarianism. The election was close, and the crucial contest was in New York. There, Aaron Burr mobilized an organization of Revolutionary War veterans, the Tammany Society, to serve as a Republican political machine. Through Tammany’s efforts, the party carried the city by a large majority, and with it the state. Jefferson, it seemed, had won.

But an unexpected complication soon jeopardized the Republican victory. The Constitution called for each elector to “vote by ballot for two persons.” The expectation was that

an elector would cast one vote for his party's presidential candidate and the other for his party's vice presidential candidate. To avoid a tie, the Republicans had intended that one elector would refrain from voting for the party's vice presidential candidate, Aaron Burr. But when the votes were counted, Jefferson and Burr each had 73. No candidate had a majority, and the House of Representatives had to choose between the two top candidates, Jefferson and Burr. Each state delegation would cast a single vote.

The new Congress, elected in 1800 with a Republican majority, was not to convene until after the inauguration of the president, so it was the Federalist Congress that had to decide the question. After a long deadlock, several leading Federalists concluded, following Hamilton's advice, that Burr was too unreliable to trust with the presidency. On the thirty-sixth ballot, Jefferson was elected.

After the election of 1800, the only branch of the federal government left in Federalist hands was the judiciary. The Adams administration spent its last months in office taking steps to make the party's hold on the courts secure. With the Judiciary Act of 1801, the Federalists reduced the number of Supreme Court justiceships by one but greatly increased the number of federal judgeships as a whole. Adams quickly appointed Federalists to the newly created positions. He also appointed a leading Federalist, John Marshall, to be chief justice of the Supreme Court, a position Marshall held for thirty-four years. Indeed, there were charges that Adams stayed up until midnight on his last day in office to finish signing the new judges' commissions. These officeholders became known as the "midnight appointments."

Even so, the Republicans viewed their victory as almost complete. The nation had, they believed, been saved from tyranny. The exuberance with which the victors viewed the future—and the importance they ascribed to the defeat of the Federalists—was evident in the phrase Jefferson himself later used to describe his election. He called it the **"Revolution of 1800."**

CONCLUSION

The Constitution of 1787 created a federal system of dispersed authority, divided among national and state governments and among an executive, a legislature, and a judiciary. The young nation thus sought to balance its need for an effective central government against its fear of concentrated and despotic power. The ability of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention to compromise revealed their yearning for a stable political system. The same willingness to compromise allowed the greatest challenge to the ideals of the new democracy—slavery—to survive intact.

The writing and ratifying of the Constitution settled some questions about the shape of the new nation. The first twelve years under the government created by the Constitution solved others. And yet by the year 1800, a basic disagreement about the future of the nation remained unresolved, creating bitter divisions and conflicts on the political scene. The election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency that year opened a new chapter in the nation's history, solidly repudiating the Federalist grip on power. It also brought to a close, at least temporarily and surprisingly peacefully, savage political conflicts that had seemed to threaten the nation's future.

KEY TERMS/PEOPLE/PLACES/EVENTS

Alexander Hamilton 135	Federalists 141	Revolution of 1800 153
Alien and Sedition Acts 151	James Madison 137	separation of powers 137
Antifederalists 142	Jay’s Treaty 149	<i>The Federalist Papers</i> 142
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RECALL AND REFLECT

1. How did the Constitution of 1787 attempt to resolve the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?
2. What role did *The Federalist Papers* play in the battle over ratification of the Constitution?
3. What were the main tenets of Alexander Hamilton’s financial program?
4. What diplomatic crises did the United States face in the first decade of its existence, and how did the new government respond to these crises?
5. What was the “Revolution of 1800” and in what way was it a revolution? What were the bitter disagreements of the country’s first party system?