

CHAPTER 8

Growing Pains: The New Republic, 1790–1820



Figure 8.1 “The happy Effects of the Grand System [sic] of shutting Ports against the English!!” appeared in 1808. Less than a year earlier, Thomas Jefferson had recommended (and Congress had passed) the Embargo Act of 1807, which barred American ships from leaving their ports.

Chapter Outline

- 8.1 Competing Visions: Federalists and Democratic-Republicans
- 8.2 The New American Republic
- 8.3 Partisan Politics
- 8.4 The United States Goes Back to War

Introduction

The partisan political cartoon above (**Figure 8.1**) lampoons Thomas Jefferson’s 1807 Embargo Act, a move that had a devastating effect on American commerce. American farmers and merchants complain to President Jefferson, while the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte whispers to him, “You shall be King hereafter.” This image illustrates one of many political struggles in the years after the fight for ratification of the Constitution. In the nation’s first few years, no organized political parties existed. This began to change as U.S. citizens argued bitterly about the proper size and scope of the new national government. As a result, the 1790s witnessed the rise of opposing political parties: the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. Federalists saw unchecked democracy as a dire threat to the republic, and they pointed to the excesses of the French Revolution as proof of what awaited. Democratic-Republicans opposed the Federalists’ notion that only the wellborn and well educated were able to oversee the republic; they saw it as a pathway to oppression by an aristocracy.

8.1 Competing Visions: Federalists and Democratic-Republicans

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the competing visions of the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans
- Identify the protections granted to citizens under the Bill of Rights
- Explain Alexander Hamilton's financial programs as secretary of the treasury

In June 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the federal Constitution, and the new plan for a strong central government went into effect. Elections for the first U.S. Congress were held in 1788 and 1789, and members took their seats in March 1789. In a reflection of the trust placed in him as the personification of republican virtue, George Washington became the first president in April 1789. John Adams served as his vice president; the pairing of a representative from Virginia (Washington) with one from Massachusetts (Adams) symbolized national unity. Nonetheless, political divisions quickly became apparent. Washington and Adams represented the Federalist Party, which generated a backlash among those who resisted the new government's assertions of federal power.

FEDERALISTS IN POWER

Though the Revolution had overthrown British rule in the United States, supporters of the 1787 federal constitution, known as Federalists, adhered to a decidedly British notion of social hierarchy. The Federalists did not, at first, compose a political party. Instead, Federalists held certain shared assumptions. For them, political participation continued to be linked to property rights, which barred many citizens from voting or holding office. Federalists did not believe the Revolution had changed the traditional social roles between women and men, or between whites and other races. They did believe in clear distinctions in rank and intelligence. To these supporters of the Constitution, the idea that all were equal appeared ludicrous. Women, blacks, and native peoples, they argued, had to know their place as secondary to white male citizens. Attempts to impose equality, they feared, would destroy the republic. The United States was not created to be a democracy.

The architects of the Constitution committed themselves to leading the new republic, and they held a majority among the members of the new national government. Indeed, as expected, many assumed the

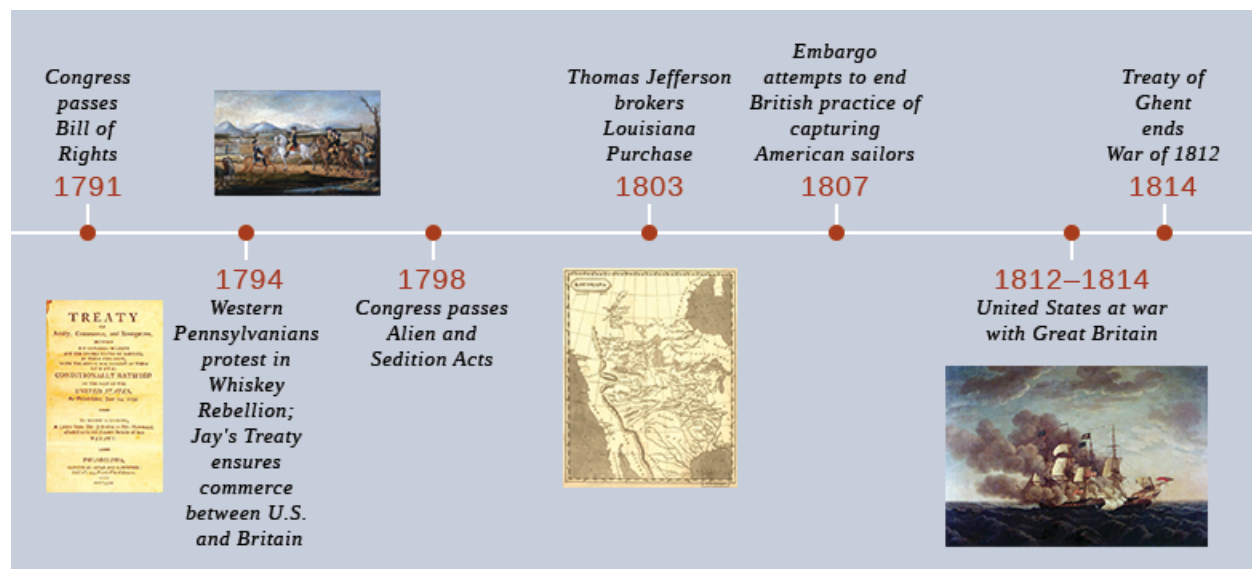


Figure 8.2

new executive posts the first Congress created. Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton, a leading Federalist, as secretary of the treasury. For secretary of state, he chose Thomas Jefferson. For secretary of war, he appointed Henry Knox, who had served with him during the Revolutionary War. Edmond Randolph, a Virginia delegate to the Constitutional Convention, was named attorney general. In July 1789, Congress also passed the Judiciary Act, creating a Supreme Court of six justices headed by those who were committed to the new national government.

Congress passed its first major piece of legislation by placing a duty on imports under the 1789 Tariff Act. Intended to raise revenue to address the country's economic problems, the act was a victory for nationalists, who favored a robust, powerful federal government and had worked unsuccessfully for similar measures during the Confederation Congress in the 1780s. Congress also placed a fifty-cent-per-ton duty (based on materials transported, not the weight of a ship) on foreign ships coming into American ports, a move designed to give the commercial advantage to American ships and goods.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Many Americans opposed the 1787 Constitution because it seemed a dangerous concentration of centralized power that threatened the rights and liberties of ordinary U.S. citizens. These opponents, known collectively as Anti-Federalists, did not constitute a political party, but they united in demanding protection for individual rights, and several states made the passing of a bill of rights a condition of their acceptance of the Constitution. Rhode Island and North Carolina rejected the Constitution because it did not already have this specific bill of rights.

Federalists followed through on their promise to add such a bill in 1789, when Virginia Representative James Madison introduced and Congress approved the **Bill of Rights (Table 8.1)**. Adopted in 1791, the bill consisted of the first ten amendments to the Constitution and outlined many of the personal rights state constitutions already guaranteed.

Table 8.1 Rights Protected by the First Ten Amendments

Amendment 1	Right to freedoms of religion and speech; right to assemble and to petition the government for redress of grievances
Amendment 2	Right to keep and bear arms to maintain a well-regulated militia
Amendment 3	Right not to house soldiers during time of war
Amendment 4	Right to be secure from unreasonable search and seizure
Amendment 5	Rights in criminal cases, including to due process and indictment by grand jury for capital crimes, as well as the right not to testify against oneself
Amendment 6	Right to a speedy trial by an impartial jury
Amendment 7	Right to a jury trial in civil cases
Amendment 8	Right not to face excessive bail or fines, or cruel and unusual punishment
Amendment 9	Rights retained by the people, even if they are not specifically enumerated by the Constitution
Amendment 10	States' rights to powers not specifically delegated to the federal government

The adoption of the Bill of Rights softened the Anti-Federalists' opposition to the Constitution and gave the new federal government greater legitimacy among those who otherwise distrusted the new centralized

power created by men of property during the secret 1787 Philadelphia Constitutional Convention.

Click and Explore



Visit the **National Archives** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//BillRights>) to consider the first ten amendments to the Constitution as an expression of the fears many citizens harbored about the powers of the new federal government. What were these fears? How did the Bill of Rights calm them?

ALEXANDER HAMILTON'S PROGRAM

Alexander Hamilton, Washington's secretary of the treasury, was an ardent nationalist who believed a strong federal government could solve many of the new country's financial ills. Born in the West Indies, Hamilton had worked on a St. Croix plantation as a teenager and was in charge of the accounts at a young age. He knew the Atlantic trade very well and used that knowledge in setting policy for the United States. In the early 1790s, he created the foundation for the U.S. financial system. He understood that a robust federal government would provide a solid financial foundation for the country.

The United States began mired in debt. In 1789, when Hamilton took up his post, the federal debt was over \$53 million. The states had a combined debt of around \$25 million, and the United States had been unable to pay its debts in the 1780s and was therefore considered a credit risk by European countries. Hamilton wrote three reports offering solutions to the economic crisis brought on by these problems. The first addressed public credit, the second addressed banking, and the third addressed raising revenue.

The Report on Public Credit

For the national government to be effective, Hamilton deemed it essential to have the support of those to whom it owed money: the wealthy, domestic creditor class as well as foreign creditors. In January 1790, he delivered his "Report on Public Credit" (**Figure 8.3**), addressing the pressing need of the new republic to become creditworthy. He recommended that the new federal government honor all its debts, including all paper money issued by the Confederation and the states during the war, at face value. Hamilton especially wanted wealthy American creditors who held large amounts of paper money to be invested, literally, in the future and welfare of the new national government. He also understood the importance of making the new United States financially stable for creditors abroad. To pay these debts, Hamilton proposed that the federal government sell bonds—federal interest-bearing notes—to the public. These bonds would have the backing of the government and yield interest payments. Creditors could exchange their old notes for the new government bonds. Hamilton wanted to give the paper money that states had issued during the war the same status as government bonds; these federal notes would begin to yield interest payments in 1792.

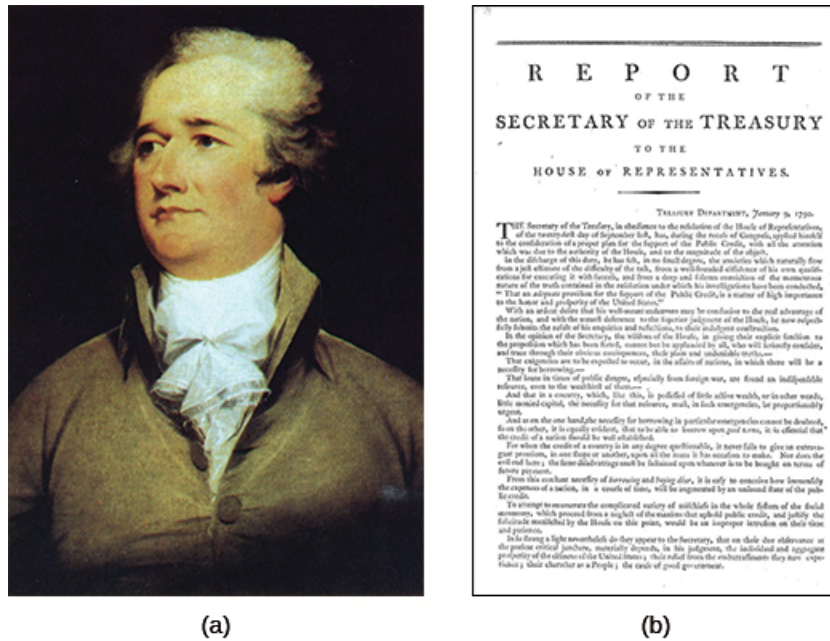


Figure 8.3 As the first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton (a), shown here in a 1792 portrait by John Trumbull, released the “Report on Public Credit” (b) in January 1790.

Hamilton designed his “Report on Public Credit” (later called “First Report on Public Credit”) to ensure the survival of the new and shaky American republic. He knew the importance of making the United States financially reliable, secure, and strong, and his plan provided a blueprint to achieve that goal. He argued that his plan would satisfy creditors, citing the goal of “doing justice to the creditors of the nation.” At the same time, the plan would work “to promote the increasing respectability of the American name; to answer the calls for justice; to restore landed property to its due value; to furnish new resources both to agriculture and commerce; to cement more closely the union of the states; to add to their security against foreign attack; to establish public order on the basis of upright and liberal policy.”

Hamilton’s program ignited a heated debate in Congress. A great many of both Confederation and state notes had found their way into the hands of speculators, who had bought them from hard-pressed veterans in the 1780s and paid a fraction of their face value in anticipation of redeeming them at full value at a later date. Because these speculators held so many notes, many in Congress objected that Hamilton’s plan would benefit them at the expense of the original note-holders. One of those who opposed Hamilton’s 1790 report was James Madison, who questioned the fairness of a plan that seemed to cheat poor soldiers.

Not surprisingly, states with a large debt, like South Carolina, supported Hamilton’s plan, while states with less debt, like North Carolina, did not. To gain acceptance of his plan, Hamilton worked out a compromise with Virginians Madison and Jefferson, whereby in return for their support he would give up New York City as the nation’s capital and agree on a more southern location, which they preferred. In July 1790, a site along the Potomac River was selected as the new “federal city,” which became the District of Columbia.

Hamilton’s plan to convert notes to bonds worked extremely well to restore European confidence in the U.S. economy. It also proved a windfall for creditors, especially those who had bought up state and Confederation notes at far less than face value. But it immediately generated controversy about the size and scope of the government. Some saw the plan as an unjust use of federal power, while Hamilton argued that Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution granted the government “implied powers” that gave the green light to his program.

The Report on a National Bank

As secretary of the treasury, Hamilton hoped to stabilize the American economy further by establishing a national bank. The United States operated with a flurry of different notes from multiple state banks and no coherent regulation. By proposing that the new national bank buy up large volumes of state bank notes and demanding their conversion into gold, Hamilton especially wanted to discipline those state banks that issued paper money irresponsibly. To that end, he delivered his “Report on a National Bank” in December 1790, proposing a Bank of the United States, an institution modeled on the Bank of England. The bank would issue loans to American merchants and bills of credit (federal bank notes that would circulate as money) while serving as a repository of government revenue from the sale of land. Stockholders would own the bank, along with the federal government.

Like the recommendations in his “Report on Public Credit,” Hamilton’s bank proposal generated opposition. Jefferson, in particular, argued that the Constitution did not permit the creation of a national bank. In response, Hamilton again invoked the Constitution’s implied powers. President Washington backed Hamilton’s position and signed legislation creating the bank in 1791.

The Report on Manufactures

The third report Hamilton delivered to Congress, known as the “Report on Manufactures,” addressed the need to raise revenue to pay the interest on the national debt. Using the power to tax as provided under the Constitution, Hamilton put forth a proposal to tax American-made whiskey. He also knew the importance of promoting domestic manufacturing so the new United States would no longer have to rely on imported manufactured goods. To break from the old colonial system, Hamilton therefore advocated tariffs on all foreign imports to stimulate the production of American-made goods. To promote domestic industry further, he proposed federal subsidies to American industries. Like all of Hamilton’s programs, the idea of government involvement in the development of American industries was new.

With the support of Washington, the entire Hamiltonian economic program received the necessary support in Congress to be implemented. In the long run, Hamilton’s financial program helped to rescue the United States from its state of near-bankruptcy in the late 1780s. His initiatives marked the beginning of an American capitalism, making the republic creditworthy, promoting commerce, and setting for the nation a solid financial foundation. His policies also facilitated the growth of the stock market, as U.S. citizens bought and sold the federal government’s interest-bearing certificates.

THE DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN PARTY AND THE FIRST PARTY SYSTEM

James Madison and Thomas Jefferson felt the federal government had overstepped its authority by adopting the treasury secretary’s plan. Madison found Hamilton’s scheme immoral and offensive. He argued that it turned the reins of government over to the class of speculators who profited at the expense of hardworking citizens.

Jefferson, who had returned to the United States in 1790 after serving as a diplomat in France, tried unsuccessfully to convince Washington to block the creation of a national bank. He also took issue with what he perceived as favoritism given to commercial classes in the principal American cities. He thought urban life widened the gap between the wealthy few and an underclass of landless poor workers who, because of their oppressed condition, could never be good republican property owners. Rural areas, in contrast, offered far more opportunities for property ownership and virtue. In 1783 Jefferson wrote, “Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people.” Jefferson believed that self-sufficient, property-owning republican citizens or yeoman farmers held the key to the success and longevity of the American republic. (As a creature of his times, he did not envision a similar role for either women or nonwhite men.) To him, Hamilton’s program seemed to encourage economic inequalities and work against the ordinary American yeoman.

Opposition to Hamilton, who had significant power in the new federal government, including the ear of

President Washington, began in earnest in the early 1790s. Jefferson turned to his friend Philip Freneau to help organize the effort through the publication of the *National Gazette* as a counter to the Federalist press, especially the *Gazette of the United States* (Figure 8.4). From 1791 until 1793, when it ceased publication, Freneau’s partisan paper attacked Hamilton’s program and Washington’s administration. “Rules for Changing a Republic into a Monarchy,” written by Freneau, is an example of the type of attack aimed at the national government, and especially at the elitism of the Federalist Party. Newspapers in the 1790s became enormously important in American culture as partisans like Freneau attempted to sway public opinion. These newspapers did not aim to be objective; instead, they served to broadcast the views of a particular party.



Figure 8.4 Here, the front page of the Federalist *Gazette of the United States* from September 9, 1789 (a), is shown beside that of the oppositional *National Gazette* from November 14, 1791 (b). The *Gazette of the United States* featured articles, sometimes written pseudonymously or anonymously, from leading Federalists like Alexander Hamilton and John Adams. The *National Gazette* was founded two years later to counter their political influence.

Click and Explore



Visit **Lexrex.com** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//NatGazette>) to read Philip Freneau's essay and others from the *National Gazette*. Can you identify three instances of persuasive writing against the Federalist Party or the government?

Opposition to the Federalists led to the formation of Democratic-Republican societies, composed of men who felt the domestic policies of the Washington administration were designed to enrich the few while ignoring everyone else. **Democratic-Republicans** championed limited government. Their fear of centralized power originated in the experience of the 1760s and 1770s when the distant, overbearing,

and seemingly corrupt British Parliament attempted to impose its will on the colonies. The 1787 federal constitution, written in secret by fifty-five wealthy men of property and standing, ignited fears of a similar menacing plot. To opponents, the Federalists promoted aristocracy and a monarchical government—a betrayal of what many believed to be the goal of the American Revolution.

While wealthy merchants and planters formed the core of the Federalist leadership, members of the Democratic-Republican societies in cities like Philadelphia and New York came from the ranks of artisans. These citizens saw themselves as acting in the spirit of 1776, this time not against the haughty British but by what they believed to have replaced them—a commercial class with no interest in the public good. Their political efforts against the Federalists were a battle to preserve republicanism, to promote the public good against private self-interest. They published their views, held meetings to voice their opposition, and sponsored festivals and parades. In their strident newspapers attacks, they also worked to undermine the traditional forms of deference and subordination to aristocrats, in this case the Federalist elites. Some members of northern Democratic-Republican clubs denounced slavery as well.

DEFINING CITIZENSHIP

While questions regarding the proper size and scope of the new national government created a divide among Americans and gave rise to political parties, a consensus existed among men on the issue of who qualified and who did not qualify as a citizen. The 1790 Naturalization Act defined citizenship in stark racial terms. To be a citizen of the American republic, an immigrant had to be a “free white person” of “good character.” By excluding slaves, free blacks, Indians, and Asians from citizenship, the act laid the foundation for the United States as a republic of white men.

Full citizenship that included the right to vote was restricted as well. Many state constitutions directed that only male property owners or taxpayers could vote. For women, the right to vote remained out of reach except in the state of New Jersey. In 1776, the fervor of the Revolution led New Jersey revolutionaries to write a constitution extending the right to vote to unmarried women who owned property worth £50. Federalists and Democratic-Republicans competed for the votes of New Jersey women who met the requirements to cast ballots. This radical innovation continued until 1807, when New Jersey restricted voting to free white males.

8.2 The New American Republic

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the major foreign and domestic uprisings of the early 1790s
- Explain the effect of these uprisings on the political system of the United States

The colonies’ alliance with France, secured after the victory at Saratoga in 1777, proved crucial in their victory against the British, and during the 1780s France and the new United States enjoyed a special relationship. Together they had defeated their common enemy, Great Britain. But despite this shared experience, American opinions regarding France diverged sharply in the 1790s when France underwent its own revolution. Democratic-Republicans seized on the French revolutionaries’ struggle against monarchy as the welcome harbinger of a larger republican movement around the world. To the Federalists, however, the French Revolution represented pure anarchy, especially after the execution of the French king in 1793. Along with other foreign and domestic uprisings, the French Revolution helped harden the political divide in the United States in the early 1790s.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution, which began in 1789, further split American thinkers into different ideological

camps, deepening the political divide between Federalists and their Democratic-Republican foes. At first, in 1789 and 1790, the revolution in France appeared to most in the United States as part of a new chapter in the rejection of corrupt monarchy, a trend inspired by the American Revolution. A constitutional monarchy replaced the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI in 1791, and in 1792, France was declared a republic. Republican liberty, the creed of the United States, seemed to be ushering in a new era in France. Indeed, the American Revolution served as an inspiration for French revolutionaries.

The events of 1793 and 1794 challenged the simple interpretation of the French Revolution as a happy chapter in the unfolding triumph of republican government over monarchy. The French king was executed in January 1793 (**Figure 8.5**), and the next two years became known as **the Terror**, a period of extreme violence against perceived enemies of the revolutionary government. Revolutionaries advocated direct representative democracy, dismantled Catholicism, replaced that religion with a new philosophy known as the Cult of the Supreme Being, renamed the months of the year, and relentlessly employed the guillotine against their enemies. Federalists viewed these excesses with growing alarm, fearing that the radicalism of the French Revolution might infect the minds of citizens at home. Democratic-Republicans interpreted the same events with greater optimism, seeing them as a necessary evil of eliminating the monarchy and aristocratic culture that supported the privileges of a hereditary class of rulers.

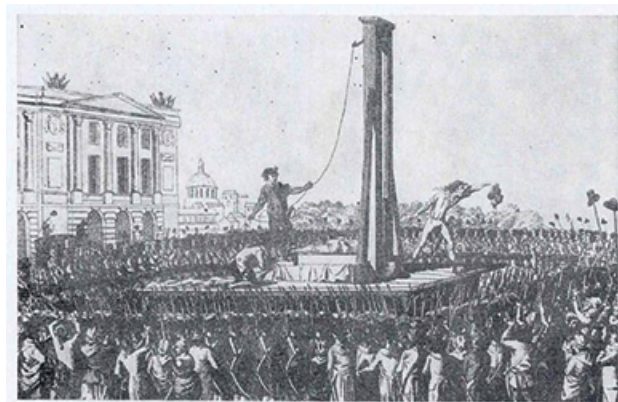


Figure 8.5 An image from a 1791 Hungarian journal depicts the beheading of Louis XVI during the French Revolution. The violence of the revolutionary French horrified many in the United States—especially Federalists, who saw it as an example of what could happen when the mob gained political control and instituted direct democracy.

The controversy in the United States intensified when France declared war on Great Britain and Holland in February 1793. France requested that the United States make a large repayment of the money it had borrowed from France to fund the Revolutionary War. However, Great Britain would judge any aid given to France as a hostile act. Washington declared the United States neutral in 1793, but Democratic-Republican groups denounced neutrality and declared their support of the French republicans. The Federalists used the violence of the French revolutionaries as a reason to attack Democratic-Republicanism in the United States, arguing that Jefferson and Madison would lead the country down a similarly disastrous path.

Click and Explore



Visit **Liberty, Equality, Fraternity** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//revolution>) for images, texts, and songs relating to the French Revolution. This momentous event's impact extended far beyond Europe, influencing politics in the United States and elsewhere in the Atlantic World.

THE CITIZEN GENÊT AFFAIR AND JAY'S TREATY

In 1793, the revolutionary French government sent Edmond-Charles Genêt to the United States to negotiate an alliance with the U.S. government. France authorized Genêt to issue **letters of marque**—documents authorizing ships and their crews to engage in piracy—to allow him to arm captured British ships in American ports with U.S. soldiers. Genêt arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, amid great Democratic-Republican fanfare. He immediately began commissioning American privateer ships and organizing volunteer American militias to attack Spanish holdings in the Americas, then traveled to Philadelphia, gathering support for the French cause along the way. President Washington and Hamilton denounced Genêt, knowing his actions threatened to pull the United States into a war with Great Britain. The **Citizen Genêt affair**, as it became known, spurred Great Britain to instruct its naval commanders in the West Indies to seize all ships trading with the French. The British captured hundreds of American ships and their cargoes, increasing the possibility of war between the two countries.

In this tense situation, Great Britain worked to prevent a wider conflict by ending its seizure of American ships and offered to pay for captured cargoes. Hamilton saw an opportunity and recommended to Washington that the United States negotiate. Supreme Court Justice John Jay was sent to Britain, instructed by Hamilton to secure compensation for captured American ships; ensure the British leave the Northwest outposts they still occupied despite the 1783 Treaty of Paris; and gain an agreement for American trade in the West Indies. Even though Jay personally disliked slavery, his mission also required him to seek compensation from the British for slaves who left with the British at the end of the Revolutionary War.

The resulting 1794 agreement, known as Jay's Treaty, fulfilled most of his original goals. The British would turn over the frontier posts in the Northwest, American ships would be allowed to trade freely in the West Indies, and the United States agreed to assemble a commission charged with settling colonial debts U.S. citizens owed British merchants. The treaty did not address the important issue of **impressment**, however—the British navy's practice of forcing or "impressing" American sailors to work and fight on British warships. Jay's Treaty led the Spanish, who worried that it signaled an alliance between the United States and Great Britain, to negotiate a treaty of their own—Pinckney's Treaty—that allowed American commerce to flow through the Spanish port of New Orleans. Pinckney's Treaty allowed American farmers, who were moving in greater numbers to the Ohio River Valley, to ship their products down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, where they could be transported to East Coast markets.

Jay's Treaty confirmed the fears of Democratic-Republicans, who saw it as a betrayal of republican France, cementing the idea that the Federalists favored aristocracy and monarchy. Partisan American newspapers tried to sway public opinion, while the skillful writing of Hamilton, who published a number of essays on the subject, explained the benefits of commerce with Great Britain.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION'S CARIBBEAN LEGACY

Unlike the American Revolution, which ultimately strengthened the institution of slavery and the powers of American slaveholders, the French Revolution inspired slave rebellions in the Caribbean, including

a 1791 slave uprising in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (modern-day Haiti). Thousands of slaves joined together to overthrow the brutal system of slavery. They took control of a large section of the island, burning sugar plantations and killing the white planters who had forced them to labor under the lash.

In 1794, French revolutionaries abolished slavery in the French empire, and both Spain and England attacked Saint-Domingue, hoping to add the colony to their own empires. Toussaint L'Ouverture, a former domestic slave, emerged as the leader in the fight against Spain and England to secure a Haiti free of slavery and further European colonialism. Because revolutionary France had abolished slavery, Toussaint aligned himself with France, hoping to keep Spain and England at bay (**Figure 8.6**).



Figure 8.6 An 1802 portrait shows Toussaint L'Ouverture, “*Chef des Noirs Insurgés de Saint Domingue*” (“Leader of the Black Insurgents of Saint Domingue”), mounted and armed in an elaborate uniform.

Events in Haiti further complicated the partisan wrangling in the United States. White refugee planters from Haiti and other French West Indian islands, along with slaves and free people of color, left the Caribbean for the United States and for Louisiana, which at the time was held by Spain. The presence of these French migrants raised fears, especially among Federalists, that they would bring the contagion of French radicalism to the United States. In addition, the idea that the French Revolution could inspire a successful slave uprising just off the American coastline filled southern whites and slaveholders with horror.

THE WHISKEY REBELLION

While the wars in France and the Caribbean divided American citizens, a major domestic test of the new national government came in 1794 over the issue of a tax on whiskey, an important part of Hamilton’s financial program. In 1791, Congress had authorized a tax of 7.5 cents per gallon of whiskey and rum. Although most citizens paid without incident, trouble erupted in four western Pennsylvania counties in an uprising known as the Whiskey Rebellion.

Farmers in the western counties of Pennsylvania produced whiskey from their grain for economic reasons. Without adequate roads or other means to transport a bulky grain harvest, these farmers distilled their grains into gin and whiskey, which were more cost-effective to transport. Since these farmers depended on the sale of whiskey, some citizens in western Pennsylvania (and elsewhere) viewed the new tax as further proof that the new national government favored the commercial classes on the eastern seaboard at the expense of farmers in the West. On the other hand, supporters of the tax argued that it helped stabilize the economy and its cost could easily be passed on to the consumer, not the farmer-distiller.

However, in the spring and summer months of 1794, angry citizens rebelled against the federal officials in charge of enforcing the federal excise law. Like the Sons of Liberty before the American Revolution, the whiskey rebels used violence and intimidation to protest policies they saw as unfair. They tarred and feathered federal officials, intercepted the federal mail, and intimidated wealthy citizens. The extent of their discontent found expression in their plan to form an independent western commonwealth, and they even began negotiations with British and Spanish representatives, hoping to secure their support for independence from the United States. The rebels also contacted their backcountry neighbors in Kentucky and South Carolina, circulating the idea of secession.

With their emphasis on personal freedoms, the whiskey rebels aligned themselves with the Democratic-Republican Party. They saw the tax as part of a larger Federalist plot to destroy their republican liberty and, in its most extreme interpretation, turn the United States into a monarchy. The federal government lowered the tax, but when federal officials tried to subpoena those distillers who remained intractable, trouble escalated. Washington responded by creating a thirteen-thousand-man militia, drawn from several states, to put down the rebellion (**Figure 8.7**). This force made it known, both domestically and to the European powers that looked on in anticipation of the new republic's collapse, that the national government would do everything in its power to ensure the survival of the United States.



Figure 8.7 This painting, attributed to Frederick Kemmelmeyer ca. 1795, depicts the massive force George Washington led to put down the Whiskey Rebellion of the previous year. Federalists made clear they would not tolerate mob action.

DEFINING "AMERICAN"

☀ *Alexander Hamilton: “Shall the majority govern or be governed?”*

Alexander Hamilton frequently wrote persuasive essays under pseudonyms, like “Tully,” as he does here. In this 1794 essay, Hamilton denounces the whiskey rebels and majority rule.

It has been observed that the means most likely to be employed to turn the insurrection in the western country to the detriment of the government, would be artfully calculated among other things ‘to divert your attention from the true question to be decided.’

Let us see then what is this question. It is plainly this—shall the majority govern or be governed? shall the nation rule, or be ruled? shall the general will prevail, or the will of a faction? shall there be government, or no government? . . .

The Constitution *you* have ordained for yourselves and your posterity contains this express clause, ‘The Congress *shall have power* to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and *Excises*, to pay the debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States.’ You have then, by a solemn and deliberate act, the most important and sacred that a nation can perform, pronounced and decreed, that your Representatives in Congress shall have power to lay *Excises*. You have done nothing since to reverse or impair that decree. . . . But the four western counties of Pennsylvania, undertake to rejudge and reverse your decrees, you have said, ‘The Congress *shall have power* to lay *Excises*.’ They say, ‘The Congress *shall not have* this power.’ . . .

There is no road to *despotism* more sure or more to be dreaded than that which begins at *anarchy*.”

—Alexander Hamilton’s “Tully No. II” for the *American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, August 26, 1794

What are the major arguments put forward by Hamilton in this document? Who do you think his audience is?

WASHINGTON’S INDIAN POLICY

Relationships with Indians were a significant problem for Washington’s administration, but one on which white citizens agreed: Indians stood in the way of white settlement and, as the 1790 Naturalization Act made clear, were not citizens. After the War of Independence, white settlers poured into lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. As a result, from 1785 to 1795, a state of war existed on the frontier between these settlers and the Indians who lived in the Ohio territory. In both 1790 and 1791, the Shawnee and Miami had defended their lands against the whites who arrived in greater and greater numbers from the East. In response, Washington appointed General Anthony Wayne to bring the Western Confederacy—a loose alliance of tribes—to heel. In 1794, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Wayne was victorious. With the 1795 Treaty of Greenville (**Figure 8.8**), the Western Confederacy gave up their claims to Ohio.



Figure 8.8 Notice the contrasts between the depictions of federal and native representatives in this painting of the signing of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. What message or messages did the artist intend to convey?

8.3 Partisan Politics

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify key examples of partisan wrangling between the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans
- Describe how foreign relations affected American politics
- Assess the importance of the Louisiana Purchase

George Washington, who had been reelected in 1792 by an overwhelming majority, refused to run for a third term, thus setting a precedent for future presidents. In the presidential election of 1796, the two parties—Federalist and Democratic-Republican—competed for the first time. Partisan rancor over the French Revolution and the Whiskey Rebellion fueled the divide between them, and Federalist John Adams defeated his Democratic-Republican rival Thomas Jefferson by a narrow margin of only three electoral votes. In 1800, another close election swung the other way, and Jefferson began a long period of Democratic-Republican government.

THE PRESIDENCY OF JOHN ADAMS

The war between Great Britain and France in the 1790s shaped U.S. foreign policy. As a new and, in comparison to the European powers, extremely weak nation, the American republic had no control over European events, and no real leverage to obtain its goals of trading freely in the Atlantic. To Federalist president John Adams, relations with France posed the biggest problem. After the Terror, the French Directory ruled France from 1795 to 1799. During this time, Napoleon rose to power.

AMERICANA

☀ *The Art of Ralph Earl*

Ralph Earl was an eighteenth-century American artist, born in Massachusetts, who remained loyal to the British during the Revolutionary War. He fled to England in 1778, but he returned to New England in the mid-1780s and began painting portraits of leading Federalists.

His portrait of Connecticut Federalist Oliver Ellsworth and his wife Abigail conveys the world as Federalists liked to view it: an orderly landscape administered by men of property and learning. His portrait of dry goods merchant Elijah Boardman shows Boardman as well-to-do and highly cultivated; his books include the works of Shakespeare and Milton (**Figure 8.9**).



(a)



(b)

Figure 8.9 Ralph Earl's portraits are known for placing their subjects in an orderly world, as seen here in the 1801 portrait of Oliver and Abigail Wolcott Ellsworth (a) and the 1789 portrait of Elijah Boardman (b).

What similarities do you see in the two portraits by Ralph Earl? What do the details of each portrait reveal about the sitters? About the artist and the 1790s?

Because France and Great Britain were at war, the French Directory issued decrees stating that any ship carrying British goods could be seized on the high seas. In practice, this meant the French would target American ships, especially those in the West Indies, where the United States conducted a brisk trade with the British. France declared its 1778 treaty with the United States null and void, and as a result, France and the United States waged an undeclared war—or what historians refer to as the Quasi-War—from 1796 to 1800. Between 1797 and 1799, the French seized 834 American ships, and Adams urged the buildup of the U.S. Navy, which consisted of only a single vessel at the time of his election in 1796 (**Figure 8.10**).



Figure 8.10 This 1799 print, entitled “Preparation for WAR to defend Commerce,” shows the construction of a naval ship, part of the effort to ensure the United States had access to free trade in the Atlantic world.

In 1797, Adams sought a diplomatic solution to the conflict with France and dispatched envoys to negotiate terms. The French foreign minister, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, sent emissaries who told the American envoys that the United States must repay all outstanding debts owed to France, lend France 32 million guilders (Dutch currency), and pay a £50,000 bribe before any negotiations could take place. News of the attempt to extract a bribe, known as the **XYZ affair** because the French emissaries were referred to as X, Y, and Z in letters that President Adams released to Congress, outraged the American public and turned public opinion decidedly against France (**Figure 8.11**). In the court of public opinion, Federalists appeared to have been correct in their interpretation of France, while the pro-French Democratic-Republicans had been misled.



Figure 8.11 This anonymous 1798 cartoon, *Property Protected à la Française*, satirizes the XYZ affair. Five Frenchmen are shown plundering the treasures of a woman representing the United States. One man holds a sword labeled “French Argument” and a sack of gold and riches labeled “National Sack and Diplomatic Perquisites,” while the others collect her valuables. A group of other Europeans look on and commiserate that France treated them the same way.

Click and Explore



Read the “transcript” of the above cartoon in the **America in Caricature, 1765–1865** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//cartoon>) collection at Indiana University’s Lilly Library.

The complicated situation in Haiti, which remained a French colony in the late 1790s, also came to the attention of President Adams. The president, with the support of Congress, had created a U.S. Navy that now included scores of vessels. Most of the American ships cruised the Caribbean, giving the United States the edge over France in the region. In Haiti, the rebellion leader Toussaint, who had to contend with various domestic rivals seeking to displace him, looked to end an U.S. embargo on France and its colonies, put in place in 1798, so that his forces would receive help to deal with the civil unrest. In early 1799, in order to capitalize upon trade in the lucrative West Indies and undermine France’s hold on the island, Congress ended the ban on trade with Haiti—a move that acknowledged Toussaint’s leadership, to the horror of American slaveholders. Toussaint was able to secure an independent black republic in Haiti by 1804.

THE ALIEN AND SEDITION ACTS

The surge of animosity against France during the Quasi-War led Congress to pass several measures that in time undermined Federalist power. These 1798 war measures, known as the Alien and Sedition Acts, aimed to increase national security against what most had come to regard as the French menace. The Alien Act and the Alien Enemies Act took particular aim at French immigrants fleeing the West Indies by giving the president the power to deport new arrivals who appeared to be a threat to national security. The act expired in 1800 with no immigrants having been deported. The Sedition Act imposed harsh penalties—up to five years’ imprisonment and a massive fine of \$5,000 in 1790 dollars—on those convicted of speaking or writing “in a scandalous or malicious” manner against the government of the United States. Twenty-five men, all Democratic-Republicans, were indicted under the act, and ten were convicted. One of these was Congressman Matthew Lyon (**Figure 8.12**), representative from Vermont, who had launched his own newspaper, *The Scourge Of Aristocracy and Repository of Important Political Truth*.



Figure 8.12 This 1798 cartoon, “Congressional Pugilists,” shows partisan chaos in the U.S. House of Representatives as Matthew Lyon, a Democratic-Republican from Vermont, holds forth against his opponent, Federalist Roger Griswold.

The Alien and Sedition Acts raised constitutional questions about the freedom of the press provided under the First Amendment. Democratic-Republicans argued that the acts were evidence of the Federalists’ intent to squash individual liberties and, by enlarging the powers of the national government, crush states’ rights. Jefferson and Madison mobilized the response to the acts in the form of statements known as the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, which argued that the acts were illegal and unconstitutional. The resolutions introduced the idea of nullification, the right of states to nullify acts of Congress, and advanced the argument of states’ rights. The resolutions failed to rally support in other states, however. Indeed, most other states rejected them, citing the necessity of a strong national government.

The Quasi-War with France came to an end in 1800, when President Adams was able to secure the Treaty of Mortefontaine. His willingness to open talks with France divided the Federalist Party, but the treaty reopened trade between the two countries and ended the French practice of taking American ships on the high seas.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1800 AND THE PRESIDENCY OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

The **Revolution of 1800** refers to the first transfer of power from one party to another in American history, when the presidency passed to Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson (**Figure 8.13**) in the 1800 election. The peaceful transition calmed contemporary fears about possible violent reactions to a new party’s taking the reins of government. The passing of political power from one political party to another without bloodshed also set an important precedent.

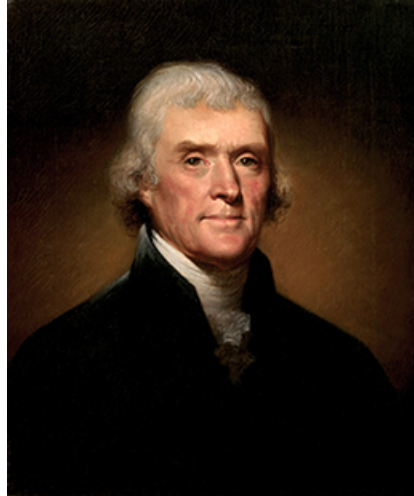


Figure 8.13 Thomas Jefferson's victory in 1800 signaled the ascendancy of the Democratic-Republicans and the decline of Federalist power.

The election did prove even more divisive than the 1796 election, however, as both the Federalist and Democratic-Republican Parties waged a mudslinging campaign unlike any seen before. Because the Federalists were badly divided, the Democratic-Republicans gained political ground. Alexander Hamilton, who disagreed with President Adams's approach to France, wrote a lengthy letter, meant for people within his party, attacking his fellow Federalist's character and judgment and ridiculing his handling of foreign affairs. Democratic-Republicans got hold of and happily reprinted the letter.

Jefferson viewed participatory democracy as a positive force for the republic, a direct departure from Federalist views. His version of participatory democracy only extended, however, to the white yeoman farmers in whom Jefferson placed great trust. While Federalist statesmen, like the architects of the 1787 federal constitution, feared a pure democracy, Jefferson was far more optimistic that the common American farmer could be trusted to make good decisions. He believed in majority rule, that is, that the majority of yeoman should have the power to make decisions binding upon the whole. Jefferson had cheered the French Revolution, even when the French republic instituted the Terror to ensure the monarchy would not return. By 1799, however, he had rejected the cause of France because of his opposition to Napoleon's seizure of power and creation of a dictatorship.

Over the course of his two terms as president—he was reelected in 1804—Jefferson reversed the policies of the Federalist Party by turning away from urban commercial development. Instead, he promoted agriculture through the sale of western public lands in small and affordable lots. Perhaps Jefferson's most lasting legacy is his vision of an "empire of liberty." He distrusted cities and instead envisioned a rural republic of land-owning white men, or yeoman republican farmers. He wanted the United States to be the breadbasket of the world, exporting its agricultural commodities without suffering the ills of urbanization and industrialization. Since American yeomen would own their own land, they could stand up against those who might try to buy their votes with promises of property. Jefferson championed the rights of states and insisted on limited federal government as well as limited taxes. This stood in stark contrast to the Federalists' insistence on a strong, active federal government. Jefferson also believed in fiscal austerity. He pushed for—and Congress approved—the end of all internal taxes, such as those on whiskey and rum. The most significant trimming of the federal budget came at the expense of the military; Jefferson did not believe in maintaining a costly military, and he slashed the size of the navy Adams had worked to build up. Nonetheless, Jefferson responded to the capture of American ships and sailors by pirates off the coast of North Africa by leading the United States into war against the Muslim Barbary States in 1801, the first conflict fought by Americans overseas.

The slow decline of the Federalists, which began under Jefferson, led to a period of one-party rule in

national politics. Historians call the years between 1815 and 1828 the “Era of Good Feelings” and highlight the “Virginia dynasty” of the time, since the two presidents who followed Jefferson—James Madison and James Monroe—both hailed from his home state. Like him, they owned slaves and represented the Democratic-Republican Party. Though Federalists continued to enjoy popularity, especially in the Northeast, their days of prominence in setting foreign and domestic policy had ended.

PARTISAN ACRIMONY

The earliest years of the nineteenth century were hardly free of problems between the two political parties. Early in Jefferson’s term, controversy swirled over President Adams’s judicial appointments of many Federalists during his final days in office. When Jefferson took the oath of office, he refused to have the commissions for these Federalist justices delivered to the appointed officials.

One of Adams’s appointees, William Marbury, had been selected to be a justice of the peace in the District of Columbia, and when his commission did not arrive, he petitioned the Supreme Court for an explanation from Jefferson’s secretary of state, James Madison. In deciding the case, *Marbury v. Madison*, in 1803, Chief Justice John Marshall agreed that Marbury had the right to a legal remedy, establishing that individuals had rights even the president of the United States could not abridge. However, Marshall also found that Congress’s Judicial Act of 1789, which would have given the Supreme Court the power to grant Marbury remedy, was unconstitutional because the Constitution did not allow for cases like Marbury’s to come directly before the Supreme Court. Thus, Marshall established the principle of judicial review, which strengthened the court by asserting its power to review (and possibly nullify) the actions of Congress and the president. Jefferson was not pleased, but neither did Marbury get his commission.

The animosity between the political parties exploded into open violence in 1804, when Aaron Burr, Jefferson’s first vice president, and Alexander Hamilton engaged in a duel. When Democratic-Republican Burr lost his bid for the office of governor of New York, he was quick to blame Hamilton, who had long hated him and had done everything in his power to discredit him. On July 11, the two antagonists met in Weehawken, New Jersey, to exchange bullets in a duel in which Burr shot and mortally wounded Hamilton.

THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

Jefferson, who wanted to expand the United States to bring about his “empire of liberty,” realized his greatest triumph in 1803 when the United States bought the Louisiana territory from France. For \$15 million—a bargain price, considering the amount of land involved—the United States doubled in size. Perhaps the greatest real estate deal in American history, the **Louisiana Purchase** greatly enhanced the Jeffersonian vision of the United States as an agrarian republic in which yeomen farmers worked the land. Jefferson also wanted to bolster trade in the West, seeing the port of New Orleans and the Mississippi River (then the western boundary of the United States) as crucial to American agricultural commerce. In his mind, farmers would send their produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, where it would be sold to European traders.

The purchase of Louisiana came about largely because of circumstances beyond Jefferson’s control, though he certainly recognized the implications of the transaction. Until 1801, Spain had controlled New Orleans and had given the United States the right to traffic goods in the port without paying customs duties. That year, however, the Spanish had ceded Louisiana (and New Orleans) to France. In 1802, the United States lost its right to deposit goods free in the port, causing outrage among many, some of whom called for war with France.

Jefferson instructed Robert Livingston, the American envoy to France, to secure access to New Orleans, sending James Monroe to France to add additional pressure. The timing proved advantageous. Because black slaves in the French colony of Haiti had successfully overthrown the brutal plantation regime, Napoleon could no longer hope to restore the empire lost with France’s defeat in the French and Indian War (1754–1763). His vision of Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley as the source for food for Haiti, the

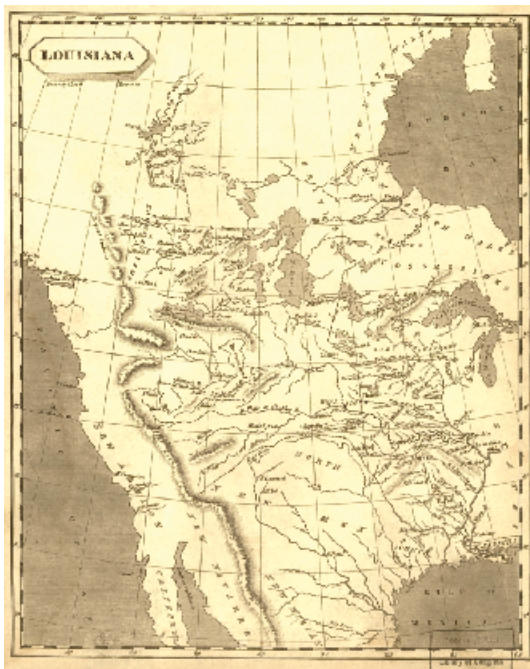
most profitable sugar island in the world, had failed. The emperor therefore agreed to the sale in early 1803.

Click and Explore



Explore the collected maps and documents relating to the Louisiana Purchase and its history at the **Library of Congress** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//LaPurchase>) site.

The true extent of the United States' new territory remained unknown (**Figure 8.14**). Would it provide the long-sought quick access to Asian markets? Geographical knowledge was limited; indeed, no one knew precisely what lay to the west or how long it took to travel from the Mississippi to the Pacific. Jefferson selected two fellow Virginians, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, to lead an expedition to the new western lands. Their purpose was to discover the commercial possibilities of the new land and, most importantly, potential trade routes. From 1804 to 1806, Lewis and Clark traversed the West.



(a)



(b)

Figure 8.14 This 1804 map (a) shows the territory added to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Compare this depiction to the contemporary map (b). How does the 1804 version differ from what you know of the geography of the United States?

The Louisiana Purchase helped Jefferson win reelection in 1804 by a landslide. Of 176 electoral votes cast, all but 14 were in his favor. The great expansion of the United States did have its critics, however, especially northerners who feared the addition of more slave states and a corresponding lack of representation of their interests in the North. And under a strict interpretation of the Constitution, it remained unclear whether the president had the power to add territory in this fashion. But the vast

majority of citizens cheered the increase in the size of the republic. For slaveholders, new western lands would be a boon; for slaves, the Louisiana Purchase threatened to entrench their suffering further.

8.4 The United States Goes Back to War

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the causes and consequences of the War of 1812
- Identify the important events of the War of 1812 and explain their significance

The origins of the War of 1812, often called the Second War of American Independence, are found in the unresolved issues between the United States and Great Britain. One major cause was the British practice of impressment, whereby American sailors were taken at sea and forced to fight on British warships; this issue was left unresolved by Jay's Treaty in 1794. In addition, the British in Canada supported Indians in their fight against further U.S. expansion in the Great Lakes region. Though Jefferson wanted to avoid what he called "entangling alliances," staying neutral proved impossible.

THE EMBARGO OF 1807

France and England, engaged in the Napoleonic Wars, which raged between 1803 and 1815, both declared open season on American ships, which they seized on the high seas. England was the major offender, since the Royal Navy, following a time-honored practice, "impressed" American sailors by forcing them into its service. The issue came to a head in 1807 when the HMS *Leopard*, a British warship, fired on a U.S. naval ship, the *Chesapeake*, off the coast of Norfolk, Virginia. The British then boarded the ship and took four sailors. Jefferson chose what he thought was the best of his limited options and responded to the crisis through the economic means of a sweeping ban on trade, the Embargo Act of 1807. This law prohibited American ships from leaving their ports until Britain and France stopped seizing them on the high seas. As a result of the embargo, American commerce came to a near-total halt.

The logic behind the embargo was that cutting off all trade would so severely hurt Britain and France that the seizures at sea would end. However, while the embargo did have some effect on the British economy, it was American commerce that actually felt the brunt of the impact (**Figure 8.15**). The embargo hurt American farmers, who could no longer sell their goods overseas, and seaport cities experienced a huge increase in unemployment and an uptick in bankruptcies. All told, American business activity declined by 75 percent from 1808 to 1809.



Figure 8.15 In this political cartoon from 1807, a snapping turtle (holding a shipping license) grabs a smuggler in the act of sneaking a barrel of sugar to a British ship. The smuggler cries, “Oh, this cursed Ograbme!” (“Ograbme” is “embargo” spelled backwards.)

Enforcement of the embargo proved very difficult, especially in the states bordering British Canada. Smuggling was widespread; Smugglers’ Notch in Vermont, for example, earned its name from illegal trade with British Canada. Jefferson attributed the problems with the embargo to lax enforcement.

At the very end of his second term, Jefferson signed the Non-Intercourse Act of 1808, lifting the unpopular embargoes on trade except with Britain and France. In the election of 1808, American voters elected another Democratic-Republican, James Madison. Madison inherited Jefferson’s foreign policy issues involving Britain and France. Most people in the United States, especially those in the West, saw Great Britain as the major problem.

TECUMSEH AND THE WESTERN CONFEDERACY

Another underlying cause of the War of 1812 was British support for native resistance to U.S. western expansion. For many years, white settlers in the American western territories had besieged the Indians living there. Under Jefferson, two Indian policies existed: forcing Indians to adopt American ways of agricultural life, or aggressively driving Indians into debt in order to force them to sell their lands.

In 1809, Tecumseh, a Shawnee war chief, rejuvenated the Western Confederacy. His brother, Tenskwatawa, was a prophet among the Shawnee who urged a revival of native ways and rejection of Anglo-American culture, including alcohol. In 1811, William Henry Harrison, the governor of the Indiana Territory, attempted to eliminate the native presence by attacking Prophetstown, a Shawnee settlement named in honor of Tenskwatawa. In the ensuing Battle of Tippecanoe, U.S. forces led by Harrison destroyed the settlement (**Figure 8.16**). They also found ample evidence that the British had supplied the Western Confederacy with weapons, despite the stipulations of earlier treaties.



Figure 8.16 Portrait (a), painted by Charles Bird King in 1820, is a depiction of Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa. Portrait (b) is Rembrandt Peele’s 1813 depiction of William Henry Harrison. What are the significant similarities and differences between the portraits? What was each artist trying to convey?

THE WAR OF 1812

The seizure of American ships and sailors, combined with the British support of Indian resistance, led to strident calls for war against Great Britain. The loudest came from the “war hawks,” led by Henry Clay from Kentucky and John C. Calhoun from South Carolina, who would not tolerate British insults to American honor. Opposition to the war came from Federalists, especially those in the Northeast, who knew war would disrupt the maritime trade on which they depended. In a narrow vote, Congress authorized the president to declare war against Britain in June 1812.

The war went very badly for the United States at first. In August 1812, the United States lost Detroit to the British and their Indian allies, including a force of one thousand men led by Tecumseh. By the end of the year, the British controlled half the Northwest. The following year, however, U.S. forces scored several victories. Captain Oliver Hazard Perry and his naval force defeated the British on Lake Erie. At the Battle of the Thames in Ontario, the United States defeated the British and their native allies, and Tecumseh was counted among the dead. Indian resistance began to ebb, opening the Indiana and Michigan territories for white settlement.

These victories could not turn the tide of the war, however. With the British gaining the upper hand during the Napoleonic Wars and Napoleon’s French army on the run, Great Britain now could divert skilled combat troops from Europe to fight in the United States. In July 1814, forty-five hundred hardened British soldiers sailed up the Chesapeake Bay and burned Washington, DC, to the ground, forcing President Madison and his wife to run for their lives (**Figure 8.17**). According to one report, they left behind a dinner the British officers ate. That summer, the British shelled Baltimore, hoping for another victory. However, they failed to dislodge the U.S. forces, whose survival of the bombardment inspired Francis Scott Key to write “The Star-Spangled Banner.”



Figure 8.17 George Munger painted *The President's House* shortly after the War of 1812, ca. 1814–1815. The painting shows the result of the British burning of Washington, DC.

AMERICANA

Francis Scott Key's "In Defense of Fort McHenry"

After the British bombed Baltimore's Fort McHenry in 1814 but failed to overcome the U.S. forces there, Francis Scott Key was inspired by the sight of the American flag, which remained hanging proudly in the aftermath. He wrote the poem "In Defense of Fort McHenry," which was later set to the tune of a British song called "The Anacreontic Song" and eventually became the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
 What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thru the perilous fight,
 O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
 And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
 Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
 O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
 Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
 What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
 As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
 Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
 In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream:
 'Tis the star-spangled banner: O, long may it wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
 That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
 A home and a country should leave us no more?
 Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
 No refuge could save the hireling and slave
 From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
 Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
 Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
 Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
 Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
 And this be our motto: "In God is our trust"
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!
 —Francis Scott Key, "In Defense of Fort McHenry," 1814

What images does Key use to describe the American spirit? Most people are familiar with only the first verse of the song; what do you think the last three verses add?

Click and Explore



Visit the **Smithsonian Institute** (<http://openstaxcollege.org//flag>) to explore an interactive feature on the flag that inspired “The Star-Spangled Banner,” where clickable “hot spots” on the flag reveal elements of its history.

With the end of the war in Europe, Britain was eager to end the conflict in the Americas as well. In 1814, British and U.S. diplomats met in Flanders, in northern Belgium, to negotiate the Treaty of Ghent, signed in December. The boundaries between the United States and British Canada remained as they were before the war, an outcome welcome to those in the United States who feared a rupture in the country’s otherwise steady expansion into the West.

The War of 1812 was very unpopular in New England because it inflicted further economic harm on a region dependent on maritime commerce. This unpopularity caused a resurgence of the Federalist Party in New England. Many Federalists deeply resented the power of the slaveholding Virginians (Jefferson and then Madison), who appeared indifferent to their region. The depth of the Federalists’ discontent is illustrated by the proceedings of the December 1814 Hartford Convention, a meeting of twenty-six Federalists in Connecticut, where some attendees issued calls for New England to secede from the United States. These arguments for disunion during wartime, combined with the convention’s condemnation of the government, made Federalists appear unpatriotic. The convention forever discredited the Federalist Party and led to its downfall.

EPILOGUE: THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

Due to slow communication, the last battle in the War of 1812 happened after the Treaty of Ghent had been signed ending the war. Andrew Jackson had distinguished himself in the war by defeating the Creek Indians in March 1814 before invading Florida in May of that year. After taking Pensacola, he moved his force of Tennessee fighters to New Orleans to defend the strategic port against British attack.

On January 8, 1815 (despite the official end of the war), a force of battle-tested British veterans of the Napoleonic Wars attempted to take the port. Jackson’s forces devastated the British, killing over two thousand. New Orleans and the vast Mississippi River Valley had been successfully defended, ensuring the future of American settlement and commerce. The Battle of New Orleans immediately catapulted Jackson to national prominence as a war hero, and in the 1820s, he emerged as the head of the new Democratic Party.

Key Terms

Bill of Rights the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, which guarantee individual rights

Citizen Genêt affair the controversy over the French representative who tried to involve the United States in France's war against Great Britain

Democratic-Republicans advocates of limited government who were troubled by the expansive domestic policies of Washington's administration and opposed the Federalists

impressment the practice of capturing sailors and forcing them into military service

letters of marque French warrants allowing ships and their crews to engage in piracy

Louisiana Purchase the U.S. purchase of the large territory of Louisiana from France in 1803

Marbury v. Madison the landmark 1803 case establishing the Supreme Court's powers of judicial review, specifically the power to review and possibly nullify actions of Congress and the president

Revolution of 1800 the peaceful transfer of power from the Federalists to the Democratic-Republicans with the election of 1800

the Terror a period during the French Revolution characterized by extreme violence and the execution of numerous enemies of the revolutionary government, from 1793 through 1794

XYZ affair the French attempt to extract a bribe from the United States during the Quasi-War of 1798–1800

Summary

8.1 Competing Visions: Federalists and Democratic-Republicans

While they did not yet constitute distinct political parties, Federalists and Anti-Federalists, shortly after the Revolution, found themselves at odds over the Constitution and the power that it concentrated in the federal government. While many of the Anti-Federalists' fears were assuaged by the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791, the early 1790s nevertheless witnessed the rise of two political parties: the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. These rival political factions began by defining themselves in relationship to Hamilton's financial program, a debate that exposed contrasting views of the proper role of the federal government. By championing Hamilton's bold financial program, Federalists, including President Washington, made clear their intent to use the federal government to stabilize the national economy and overcome the financial problems that had plagued it since the 1780s. Members of the Democratic-Republican opposition, however, deplored the expanded role of the new national government. They argued that the Constitution did not permit the treasury secretary's expansive program and worried that the new national government had assumed powers it did not rightfully possess. Only on the question of citizenship was there broad agreement: only free, white males who met taxpayer or property qualifications could cast ballots as full citizens of the republic.

8.2 The New American Republic

Federalists and Democratic-Republicans interpreted the execution of the French monarch and the violent establishment of a French republic in very different ways. Revolutionaries' excesses in France and the slaves' revolt in the French colony of Haiti raised fears among Federalists of similar radicalism and slave

uprisings on American shores. They looked to better relationships with Great Britain through Jay’s Treaty. Pinckney’s Treaty, which came about as a result of Jay’s Treaty, improved U.S. relations with the Spanish and opened the Spanish port of New Orleans to American commerce. Democratic-Republicans took a more positive view of the French Revolution and grew suspicious of the Federalists when they brokered Jay’s Treaty. Domestically, the partisan divide came to a dramatic head in western Pennsylvania when distillers of whiskey, many aligned with the Democratic-Republicans, took action against the federal tax on their product. Washington led a massive force to put down the uprising, demonstrating Federalist intolerance of mob action. Though divided on many issues, the majority of white citizens agreed on the necessity of eradicating the Indian presence on the frontier.

8.3 Partisan Politics

Partisan politics dominated the American political scene at the close of the eighteenth century. The Federalists’ and Democratic-Republicans’ views of the role of government were in direct opposition to each other, and the close elections of 1796 and 1801 show how the nation grappled with these opposing visions. The high tide of the Federalist Party came after the election of 1796, when the United States engaged in the Quasi-War with France. The issues arising from the Quasi-War gave Adams and the Federalists license to expand the powers of the federal government. However, the tide turned with the close election of 1800, when Jefferson began an administration based on Democratic-Republican ideals. A major success of Jefferson’s administration was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which helped to fulfill his vision of the United States as an agrarian republic.

8.4 The United States Goes Back to War

The United States was drawn into its “Second War of Independence” against Great Britain when the British, engaged in the Napoleonic Wars against France, took liberties with the fledgling nation by impressing (capturing) its sailors on the high seas and arming its Indian enemies. The War of 1812 ended with the boundaries of the United States remaining as they were before the war. The Indians in the Western Confederacy suffered a significant defeat, losing both their leader Tecumseh and their fight for contested land in the Northwest. The War of 1812 proved to be of great importance because it generated a surge of national pride, with expressions of American identity such as the poem by Francis Scott Key. The United States was unequivocally separate from Britain and could now turn as never before to expansion in the West.

Review Questions

- Which of the following is *not* one of the rights the Bill of Rights guarantees?
 - the right to freedom of speech
 - the right to an education
 - the right to bear arms
 - the right to a trial by jury
- Which of Alexander Hamilton’s financial policies and programs seemed to benefit speculators at the expense of poor soldiers?
 - the creation of a national bank
 - the public credit plan
 - the tax on whiskey
 - the “Report on Manufactures”
- What were the fundamental differences between the Federalist and Democratic-Republican visions?
 - It gave the United States land rights in the West Indies.
 - It gave American ships the right to trade in the West Indies.
 - It hardened differences between the political parties of the United States.
 - It stipulated that U.S. citizens would repay their debts from the Revolutionary War.
- Which of the following was *not* true of Jay’s Treaty of 1794?
 - It gave the United States land rights in the West Indies.
 - It gave American ships the right to trade in the West Indies.
 - It hardened differences between the political parties of the United States.
 - It stipulated that U.S. citizens would repay their debts from the Revolutionary War.

5. What was the primary complaint of the rebels in the Whiskey Rebellion?
 - A. the ban on alcohol
 - B. the lack of political representation for farmers
 - C. the need to fight Indians for more land
 - D. the tax on whiskey and rum
6. How did the French Revolution in the early 1790s influence the evolution of the American political system?
7. What was the primary issue of Adams's presidency?
 - A. war with Spain
 - B. relations with the native population
 - C. infighting within the Federalist Party
 - D. relations with France
8. Which of the following events is *not* an example of partisan acrimony?
 - A. the jailing of Matthew Lyon
 - B. the XYZ affair
 - C. the *Marbury v. Madison* case
 - D. the Hamilton-Burr duel
9. What was the importance of the Louisiana Purchase?
 - A. It gave the United States control of the port of New Orleans for trade.
 - B. It opened up the possibility of quick trade routes to Asia.
 - C. It gave the United States political leverage against the Spanish.
 - D. It provided Napoleon with an impetus to restore France's empire.
10. How did U.S. relations with France influence events at the end of the eighteenth century?
11. Why do historians refer to the election of Thomas Jefferson as the Revolution of 1800?
12. What prompted the Embargo of 1807?
 - A. British soldiers burned the U.S. capitol.
 - B. The British supplied arms to Indian insurgents.
 - C. The British navy captured American ships on the high seas and impressed their sailors into service for the British.
 - D. The British hadn't abandoned their posts in the Northwest Territory as required by Jay's Treaty.
13. What event inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner"?
 - A. Betsy Ross sewing the first American flag raised during a time of war
 - B. the British bombardment of Baltimore
 - C. the British burning of Washington, DC
 - D. the naval battle between the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake*

Critical Thinking Questions

14. Describe Alexander Hamilton's plans to address the nation's financial woes. Which aspects proved most controversial, and why? What elements of the foundation Hamilton laid can still be found in the system today?
15. Describe the growth of the first party system in the United States. How did these parties come to develop? How did they define themselves, both independently and in opposition to one another? Where did they find themselves in agreement?
16. What led to the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts? What made them so controversial?
17. What was the most significant impact of the War of 1812?

18. In what ways did the events of this era pose challenges to the U.S. Constitution? What constitutional issues were raised, and how were they addressed?

