

SESSION PREPARATION

Read the following material before attending the workshop. As you read the excerpts and primary sources, take note of the **“Questions to Consider”** as well as any questions you have. The activities in the workshop will draw on information from the readings and the video shown during the workshop.

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Following the War of Independence, Americans disagreed—often passionately—about the form and function of the Federal government. This unit explores how those conflicts played out as the new Republic defined its identity in relation to other nations.

UNIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the text materials, participating in the workshop activities, and watching the video, teachers will

- explore the debates over the powers awarded to the new federal government;
- examine how different groups of Americans sought a place for themselves in the new nation;
- learn about the international contexts that shaped the early development of the United States.

THIS UNIT FEATURES

- Textbooks excerpts (sections of U.S. history surveys, written for introductory college courses by history professors)
- Primary sources (documents and other materials created by the people who lived in the period), including the Bill of Rights, the Northwest Ordinance, an essay, a painting, and a drawing.
- An article, “African Americans in the Early Republic,” written by Gary Nash, which uses both primary sources and secondary sources (other articles and books written by historians).
- A timeline at the end of the unit, which places important events in the era of the early Republic

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CONTENT OVERVIEW

The United States of the mid-1780s was not the strong and united nation many had hoped it would be. The state governments, which had created their own constitutions during the war, had much more power than the federal government. The young nation confronted both powerful European nations and Indian nations, who were determined to keep their lands and independence.

The federal Constitution, drafted in 1787, was a bold and effective move to create a more powerful nation. It gave the federal government more authority to collect taxes and set policy. Yet many worried that this centralization of power would betray the principles of representative government for which the American Revolution had been fought.

Struggling farmers were particularly concerned that centralizing political power undercut their ability to influence government. African Americans and white women—almost completely excluded from the formal exercise of political power—argued for a more inclusive republic, even as the nation’s government became more centralized.

President George Washington’s administration faced daunting problems upon assuming office in 1789. The nation divided over how to respond to the often bloody French Revolution. England and France alike tried to manipulate United States trade and diplomacy in their longstanding battle for global supremacy. Not until the War of 1812 concluded—with a treaty more clearly establishing the nation’s international rights and boundaries—did the United States truly establish its independence and clear a path for westward expansion.

Theme One:

In the period following the Revolution, Americans disagreed over the nature and extent of federal power and representative government.

Theme Two:

White women, free blacks, slaves, yeoman farmers, and others sought their own place in the new nation.

Theme Three:

The development of the United States was shaped by international contexts: relations with various Native American nations, revolutions in Haiti and France, and another war with Great Britain.

VIDEO RELATED MATERIALS

Historical Perspectives

The American Revolution had raised questions about social and political equality, and the relationship between state and federal governments. The United States struggled over how to respond to revolutions in St. Domingue and France. The War of 1812, though inconclusive, prompted Great Britain to withdraw at last from the Old Northwest.

Faces of America

Tecumseh became one of the most determined Shawnee opponents of white settlement and played a critical role in an creating unprecedented political alliance among Indian nations.

Richard Allen became a Methodist at age 17 and gained his freedom soon after. He left a Philadelphia Methodist church over racial discrimination and in 1794 started a church that would become the foundation of a new denomination.

Judith Sargent Murray grew up in a prosperous Massachusetts family and was unusually well educated. She wrote many books and articles, many of them arguing for women's education.

Hands on History

David Bjelajac is a professor at George Washington University who studies art and architecture to better understand the past. The young United States, for example, favored classical architecture because it reassured people that the nation was rooted in the ancient past. Homes and other buildings can tell us much about the dichotomy between public and private lives during this time period.



THEME ONE

Theme One: In the period following the Revolution, Americans disagreed over the nature and extent of federal power and representative government.

Overview

The shared experience of fighting for independence obscured many political differences, which became obvious once the war ended. A group, known as Federalists, lamented the new government's weakness: Its inability to confront European powers or internal strife. Anti-Federalists retorted that liberty remained more healthy and sure when power was spread broadly and resided in states.

Although the Federalists eventually won the battle over the Constitution, the document contained many compromises and enshrined some key principles of liberty in its Bill of Rights.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the key issues dividing Federalists and Anti-Federalists?
2. Was the Constitution a retreat from representative, democratic government? Or was it a necessary tool for defining how that government would operate?
3. How did the compromises hammered out in the Constitution set the stage for later developments and conflicts in the United States?

1. Toward A New National Government

[The Articles of Confederation provided for a weak federal government that might be unable to deal with internal strife and external diplomacy.] By 1786, belief was spreading among members of Congress and other political leaders that the nation was in crisis and that the republican experiment was in danger of foundering.

Gary B. Nash and others, eds. *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson Education Inc., 2004), 241.

2. The Rise of Federalism

The supporters of a stronger national government called themselves Federalists (leading their opponents to adopt the name Anti-Federalists). Led by men such as [George] Washington, [Alexander] Hamilton, [James] Madison, and [John] Jay, whose experiences in the continental army and Congress had strengthened their national vision, the Federalists believed that the nation's survival was at stake. Such men had never been comfortable with the more democratic impulses of the Revolution. While committed to moderate republicanism, they believed that democratic change had carried too far, property rights needed greater protection, and an "aristocracy of talent" should lead the country.

Federalist leaders feared the loss of their own social and political power, but they were concerned as well about the collapse of the orderly world they believed essential to the preservation of republican liberty.

Congress's inability to handle the national debt, establish public credit, and restore overseas trade also troubled the Federalists. Sensitive to America's economic and military weakness, smarting from French and English arrogance, and aware of continuing Anglo-European designs on North America, the Federalists called for a new national government capable of extending American trade, spurring economic recovery, and protecting national interests.

Nash et al., 241–42.

3. The Grand Convention

The first step toward governmental reform came in September 1786, when delegates from five states who were gathered in Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss interstate commerce, issued a call for a convention to revise the Articles of Confederation. In February, the Confederation Congress cautiously endorsed the idea. Before long, it became clear that far more than a revision of the Articles was afoot.

Nash et al., 242.

4. Drafting the Constitution

At times over the [initial four months of crafting a constitution], it seemed that the Grand Convention would collapse under the weight of its own disagreements and the oppressive summer heat. How were the conflicting interests of large and small states to be reconciled? How should the balance of power between national and state governments be struck? How could an executive be created that was strong enough to govern but not so strong as to endanger republican liberty? And what, if anything, would the convention say about slavery and the slave trade, issues on which northerners and southerners, antislavery and proslavery advocates so passionately disagreed?

At one extreme was an audaciously conservative proposal, made by [Alexander] Hamilton, for a Congress and president elected for life and a national government so powerful that the states would become little more than administrative agencies.

At the other extreme stood the ardent Anti-Federalist Luther Martin of Maryland. Rude and unkempt, Martin opposed anything that threatened state sovereignty or smacked of aristocracy . . .

[After a short recess, the delegates fashioned what became known as the Great Compromise.] The reassembled delegates settled one major point of controversy by agreeing that representation in the lower house should be based on the total of each state's white population plus three-fifths of its blacks. Though African Americans were not accorded citizenship and could not vote, the southern delegates argued that they should be fully counted for this purpose. Delegates from the northern states, where relatively few blacks lived, did not want them counted at all, but the bargain was struck. As part of this compromise, the convention agreed that direct taxes would also be apportioned on the basis of population and that blacks would be counted similarly in that

THEME ONE EXCERPTS

calculation. On July 16, the convention accepted the principle that the states should have equal votes in the Senate. Thus the interests of both large states and small were effectively accommodated.

Determined to give the new government the stability that state governments lacked, the delegates created an electoral process designed to bring persons of wide experience and solid reputation into national office. An Electoral College of wise and experienced leaders, selected at the direction of state legislatures, would meet to choose the president. The process functioned exactly that way during the first several presidential elections.

Selection of the Senate would be similarly indirect, for its members were to be named by the state legislatures. (Not until 1913, with ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment, would the American people elect their senators directly.) Even the House of Representatives, the only popularly elected branch of the new government, was to be filled with people of standing and wealth, for the Federalists were confident that only well-established politicians would be able to attract the necessary votes.

The delegates' final set of compromises touched the fate of black Americans. At the insistence of southerners, the convention agreed that the slave trade would not formally end for another 20 years. As drafted, the Constitution did not contain the words slavery or slave trade, but spoke more vaguely about not prohibiting the "migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit." The meaning, however, was entirely clear.

[The delegates declined to abolish slavery.] More than that, they guaranteed slavery's protection, by writing in Section 2 of Article 4 that "No person held to service or labour in one state . . . [and] escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law . . . therein, be discharged from such service, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." Through such convoluted language, the delegates provided federal sanction for the capture and return of runaway slaves. This fugitive slave clause would return to haunt northern consciences in the years ahead. At the time, however, it seemed a small price to pay for sectional harmony and a new government. Northern accommodation to the demands of the southern delegates was eased, moreover, by knowledge that southerners in the Confederation Congress, still meeting in New York City, had agreed to prohibit new slaves from entering the Northwest Territory.

THEME ONE EXCERPTS

[The Constitution greatly strengthened the federal or national government.] Congress would now have the authority to levy and collect taxes, regulate commerce with foreign nations and between the states, devise uniform rules for naturalization, administer national patents and copyrights, and control the federal district in which it would eventually be located . . .

In addition, Section 10 of Article 1 contained a litany of powers now denied the states, among them issuing paper money, passing laws impairing the obligation of contracts, and entering into agreements with foreign powers other than by the consent of Congress. A final measure of the Federalists' determination to ensure the new government's supremacy over the states, was the assertion in Article 6 that the Constitution and all laws and treaties passed under it were to be regarded as the "supreme Law of the Land."

When the convention had finished its business, 3 of the 42 remaining delegates refused to sign the document. The other 39, however, affixed their names and forwarded it to the Confederation Congress along with the request that it be sent on to the states for approval. On September 17, the Grand Convention adjourned.

Nash et al., 244–46.

BILL OF RIGHTS

Questions to Consider

1. What do these amendments have in common? Are most or all of them connected by a shared perspective or concern?
2. What checks against a more powerful federal government are most apparent in the Bill of Rights?

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Creator:	James Madison, who collected and edited them
Context:	Many people were reluctant to approve the Constitution unless it included a bill of rights.
Audience:	The nation's citizens
Purpose:	To address concessions made to states prior to the ratification of the Constitution to protect individual rights

Historical Significance:

Those desiring a more powerful federal government confronted a nation full of people who believed that England had trampled on their rights; people with a deep distrust of centralized power. Many of them saw in the proposed Constitution a return or invitation to despotism. Politically astute Federalists promised to add a Bill of Rights to the Constitution to address these concerns.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

James Madison, BILL OF RIGHTS (1791).
Courtesy the National Archives and Records Administration.

5. Federalists versus Anti-Federalists

Ratification presented the Federalists with a more difficult problem than they had faced at [the Constitutional Congress in] Philadelphia, for the debate now shifted to the states where sentiment was sharply divided and the political situation was more difficult to control. Recognizing the unlikelihood of gaining quick agreement by all 13 states, the Federalists stipulated that the Constitution should go into effect when any nine agreed to it. Other states could then enter the Union as they were ready. Ratification was to be decided by specially elected conventions rather than by the state assemblies. Approval by such conventions would give the new Constitution greater legitimacy by grounding it in the consent of the people . . .

Although levels of Federalist and Anti-Federalist strength differed from state to state, opposition to the Constitution was widespread and vocal. Some critics warned that a stronger central government would threaten state interests. [Others asserted that it betrayed the principles of republican government.] Like all “energetic” governments, they warned, the one being proposed would be corrupted by its own power . . .

The Anti-Federalists were aghast at the Federalists’ vision of an expanding “republican empire.” “The idea of . . . [a] republic, on an average of 1,000 miles in length, and 800 in breadth, and containing 6 millions of white inhabitants all reduced to the same standards of morals . . . habits . . . [and] laws,” exclaimed one incredulous critic, “is itself an absurdity, and contrary to the whole experience of mankind.” Such an extended republic would quickly fall prey to factional conflict and internal disorder. The Anti-Federalists continued to believe that republican liberty could be preserved only in small, homogeneous societies, where the seeds of faction were few and public virtue guided citizens’ behavior . . .

Though joined by a common belief in the dangers of central government, Anti-Federalists were also motivated by conflicting agendas. Some opposed the new national government not because it was anti-democratic, but because it threatened their own, long-established and state-based political power. In the South, many Anti-Federalists held slaves, and their appeals to local authority did not always mean support for political equality, even among whites. Other opponents of the proposed constitution, genuinely democratic in belief, were suspicious of all political elites and regarded the states as democratic bulwarks against consolidated power. Allied as well in opposition were countless cottagers, tenant farmers, and less affluent mechanics, fiercely egalitarian in attitude, whose concerns seldom reached beyond the circumstances of their daily lives.

THEME ONE EXCERPTS

[The Federalists included many influential writers, and they soon took up their pens to defend the Constitution.] Their most important effort was a series of essays penned by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay and published in New York under the pseudonym Publius . . .

Madison, Hamilton, and Jay moved systematically through the Constitution, explaining its virtues and responding to the Anti-Federalists' attacks. In the process, they described a political vision fundamentally different from that of their Anti-Federalist opponents . . . Power, the Federalists now argued, was not the enemy of liberty but its guarantor. Where government was not sufficiently "energetic" and "efficient" (these were favorite Federalist words), demagogues and disorganizers would find opportunity to do their nefarious work . . .

The authors of the Federalist also countered the Anti-Federalists' warning that a single, extended republic encompassing the country's economic and social diversity would lead inevitably to factional conflict and destroy republican liberty. Turning the Anti-Federalists' classic, republican argument on its head, they explained that political divisions were the inevitable accompaniment of human liberty . . .

Earlier emphasis on public virtue as the guarantor of political order, the Federalists explained, had been naive, for few people would consistently put the public good ahead of their own interests. Politics had to heed this harsh fact of human nature and provide for peaceful compromise among conflicting groups. That could be best accomplished by expanding the nation so that it included innumerable factions . . .

As the ratification debate revealed, the two camps held sharply contrasting visions of the new republic. The Anti-Federalists remained much closer to the original republicanism of 1776, with its suspicion of power and wealth, its emphasis on the primacy of local government, and its fears of national development. They envisioned a decentralized republic filled with citizens who were self-reliant, guided by public virtue, and whose destiny was determined primarily by the states rather than the nation . . .

The Federalists, on the other hand, persuaded that America's situation had changed dramatically since 1776, embraced the idea of nationhood and looked forward with anticipation to the development of a rising "republican empire," fueled by commercial development and led by men of wealth and talent. Both Federalists and Anti-Federalists claimed to be heirs of the Revolution, yet they differed fundamentally in what they understood that heritage to be.

Nash et al., 246–47, 250.

6. The Struggle over Ratification

No one knows what most Americans thought of the proposed Constitution, for no national plebiscite on it was ever taken. Probably no more than several hundred thousand people participated in the elections for the state ratifying conventions, and many of the delegates carried no binding instructions from their constituents on how they should vote. A majority of the people probably opposed the document, either out of indifference or alarm. Fortunately for the Federalists, they did not have to persuade most Americans but needed only to secure majorities in nine of the state ratifying conventions, a much less formidable task.

Nash et al., 250.

THEME ONE SECONDARY SOURCE

FEDERALIST AND ANTI-FEDERALIST AREAS, 1787–88

This map identifies the areas where people favored or opposed the proposed Constitution in 1787 and 1788. What patterns do you detect? Consider North versus South, and coastal versus backcountry.

Federalist and Anti-Federalist Areas, 1787–1788

Distinct geographic patterns of Federalist and Anti-Federalist strength developed during the ratification debate. This map shows areas whose delegates to the state ratifying conventions voted for and against the Constitution.



Nash et al., 251.

7. The Social Geography of Ratification

Federalist strength was concentrated in areas along the coast and navigable rivers, and was strongest in cities and towns. Merchants and businessmen supported the Constitution most ardently. Enthusiasm also ran high among urban laborers, artisans, and shopkeepers—surprisingly so, given the Anti-Federalists’ criticism of wealth and power and their emphasis on democratic equality. City artisans and workers, after all, had been in the vanguard of democratic reform during the Revolution. But in the troubled circumstances of the late 1780s, they worried primarily about their livelihoods and believed that a stronger government could better promote overseas trade and protect American artisans from foreign competition . . .

. . . But in the interior, Federalist enthusiasm waned and Anti-Federalist sentiment increased. The centers of Anti-Federalism lay away from the coast, in central New England, upstate New York, the Virginia Piedmont and southside, and western Carolina. Among ordinary farmers living outside the market economy, local loyalties and the republicanism of 1776 still held sway, for they found Federalist visions of an expanding “American empire” alarming.

Nash et al., 250–52.

George Washington’s willingness to serve as the nation’s first executive helped to ease fears that the Constitution would lead to tyranny. But divisions emerged during Washington’s two terms in office between those who favored a still stronger federal government and those who did not. The Federalists won a closely contested election in 1796, and political tensions soon grew worse.

8. Alien and Sedition Acts

Soon after Adams's inauguration, the Federalist-dominated Congress moved to suppress the rising chorus of dissent among rural people, Democratic-Republican leaders, and newspaper editors. Such dissent, they charged, amounted to sedition—an act of insurrection against the government. Foreign influences were whipping up disloyalty among the populace and endangering the security of the new nation, the Federalists claimed. To eradicate this perceived threat, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798. These new laws made it more difficult for immigrants to become resident aliens, gave the president the power to deport or imprison aliens, and branded as traitors any people (U.S. citizens included) who “unlawfully combine or conspire together, with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government of the United States.”

Even though the Alien and Sedition Acts were unconstitutional—they violated the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech—the Federalist-dominated Supreme Court upheld them. Consequently, Democratic-Republicans were by definition guilty of treason, for they advocated policies and supported candidates opposed by the Federalists, the party in power.

In 1798 and 1799 the state legislatures of Kentucky and Virginia issued a series of resolutions condemning the Alien and Sedition Acts. Outraged at what they saw as the Federalists' blatant power grab, the two legislatures proposed that individual states had the right to declare such measures “void and of no force.” Thomas Jefferson (for Kentucky) and James Madison (for Virginia) wrote the actual resolutions. In declaring that states could essentially nullify federal laws, the two Founding Fathers unwittingly laid the theoretical framework for Southerners to ignore congressional authority in the future.

Peter H. Wood and others, *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States* (New York: Pearson Education Inc., 2003), 299.

9. Protecting and Expanding the National Interest: Jefferson's Administration to 1803

[The election of 1800 was particularly important, as it marked a peaceful transition of power from the Federalists to the Jeffersonian Republicans—who would eventually become the Democratic Party.] As president, Jefferson reconsidered his original vision of the United States: a compact country in which citizens freely pursued modest agrarian interests without interference from the national government or distractions from overseas conflicts. [Indeed, the federal government's power continued to grow. Jefferson doubled the nation's size with one stroke of the pen with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Federalist judges helped to expand the federal government's power in other ways.]

[In 1803, the Federalist appointed supreme court passed the landmark] *Marbury v. Madison* decision, which established the judiciary's right to declare acts of both the executive and legislative branches unconstitutional. When Jefferson assumed the presidency, the actual document listing Adams's choices for "midnight judges" had not yet been finalized. Jefferson ordered the new secretary of state, James Madison, to withhold the appointments. One of the nominated judges, William Marbury, petitioned the Supreme Court to force Madison to approve Adams's appointments to the bench. The Court refused to do so, arguing that the basis of Marbury's suit, Section 13 of the Judiciary Act of 1789, was unconstitutional. With this decision, the Court thereby established the principle of judicial review—the notion that the justices could invalidate any state or congressional statute they deemed unconstitutional. Chief Justice Marshall declared, "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is."

Wood et al., 320–21.

THEME ONE PRIMARY SOURCE

PAINTING OF ELECTION DAY, PHILADELPHIA, 1815

Questions to Consider

1. What is at the center of this painting? What is at the margins?
What features did the artist want to catch the viewer's eye?
2. Do you think the artist felt favorably about American democracy?
What details of the painting support your interpretation?
(Consider the use of light.)



Item 3490
John Lewis Krimmel, ELECTION DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE, (1815).
Courtesy The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Accession no. Bc47K897).

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 45

Creator:	John Lewis Krimmel
Context:	Election days were highly public and entertaining events in the early nineteenth century.
Audience:	Probably those interested in art
Purpose:	To depict and perhaps celebrate everyday life

Historical Significance:

Pennsylvania had the young nation's most democratic government during the Revolutionary War, and the proportion of its citizens who voted grew in the following decades. By 1815, when this painting was made, election days had become a time of great public displays and spectacles.

THEME ONE

Conclusion

The patriots of the American Revolution had asserted that virtuous political leaders would avoid factionalism, the creation of entrenched parties. But a decade after the Constitution had created a more powerful federal government, the young nation was split into contentious factions.

Questions to Consider

1. How was the federal government able to gain so much power between 1789 and 1812?
2. Who gained power due to this centralization? Who lost power?

THEME TWO

Theme Two: White women, free blacks, slaves, yeoman farmers, and others sought their own place in the new nation.

Overview

The American Revolution excited the hopes of subsistence yeoman farmers, African Americans, and white women. In the decades following the war, these people—at the political margins of the young nation—continued to push for more political power, even as conservatives opposed them. Struggling farmers commonly asserted that federal leaders were repeating the abuses of England by taxing and otherwise interfering in the lives of independent-minded citizens. The Constitution did not challenge slavery, but the institution waned in the North, where increasing numbers of free African Americans created their own communities. White women remained members of male-dominated households, a condition that only a few explicitly criticized, although more favored expanded social and political roles for white women.

Questions to Consider

1. What did poor farmers, upper-class white women, and African Americans have in common during this time?
2. Compare how the three groups tried to increase their independence.

1. Echoes of the American Revolution in the Countryside

[Struggling farmers often felt that their political leaders were betraying the principles of the American Revolution.] The Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 erupted when grain distillers and farmers in western Pennsylvania would not pay their federal whiskey tax. It was the culmination of a lengthy rural protest against Hamilton’s “hard money” policy. By favoring hard currency (coinage) over the more plentiful paper money, this policy resulted in the constriction of financial credit. With less money to lend, creditors charged high interest rates for loans they did grant. Debtors such as small farmers had to repay loans when money was even scarcer than when they borrowed it. This meant they could not pay their taxes or repay their loans; as a result, many faced foreclosure on their property.

Wood et al., 296.

2. “Republican Mothers” and Other Well-Off Women

[The American Revolution’s emphasis on liberty influenced women such as Abigail Adams during the conflict, and women continued to associate liberty with expanded rights after the war.] Some well-educated women in the United States read English writer Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in England and in the United States in 1792. In that manifesto, Wollstonecraft argued that young men and women should receive the same kind of education. She objected to a special female curriculum that exclusively emphasized skills such as needlepoint and musical accomplishments; this “false system of education,” she charged, left women “in a state of perpetual childhood.”

In 1801 an anonymous “American Lady” published an essay titled “A Second Vindication of the Rights of Women.” In it, she claimed that “a good kitchen woman [that is, a household drudge], very seldom makes a desirable wife, to a man of any refinement.” The anonymous “American Lady” and others who shared her opinion celebrated a new kind of woman—the “Republican mother”—who provided cultured companionship for her husband and reared her children to be virtuous, responsible members of society. [In a democratic nation, after all, boys would one day be citizens and, therefore, needed to be trained to wield political power responsibly.] . . .

THEME TWO EXCERPTS

But the idea of the “Republican mother” also suggested a more radical notion. If such a woman wanted to earn the respect accorded all intelligent human beings, she must strive for an education equal to that of men’s. In the 1790s a number of academies for “young ladies” opened in New England, including Sarah Peirce’s in Litchfield, Connecticut, and Susanna Rowson’s in Medford, Massachusetts. Many female academies catered to boarders, students living away from home. These schools offered courses in such “womanly pursuits” as needlework, etiquette, and music. But many also offered a classical curriculum consisting of mathematics, foreign languages, and geography. This system of study encouraged young women to think for themselves. In this respect, female academies challenged the view that women were intellectually inferior to and necessarily dependent on men.

Some elite women—like the anonymous “American Lady” and Alice Izard of Charleston, South Carolina—did not share this more radical viewpoint. For example, in opposition to Wollstonecraft’s argument in favor of equal education for young men and women, Izard expressed disgust with notions of female equality. “It is not by being educated with Boys, or imitating the manners of Men that we shall become more worthy beings,” she proclaimed. Women need not attain public glory, she wrote, to gain “domestic honor and true praise.”

. . . And even graduates of the new female academies often renounced aspirations to public life once they married and assumed household responsibilities. Wrote Eliza Southgate Bowne, a defender of women’s education, “I believe I must give up all pretension to profundity, for I am much more at home in my female character.”

Other women were more sympathetic to Wollstonecraft’s arguments regarding women’s equality with men. As the author of a series of essays on women’s rights such as “On the Equality of the Sexes,” published in *Massachusetts Magazine* in 1790, Judith Sargent Murray was the intellectual heir of Abigail Adams. With a notable lack of success, Adams had urged her husband, John, to secure married women’s property rights in the Constitution. By arguing for the inherent equality of men and women, Murray echoed Wollstonecraft and laid the groundwork for the women’s rights movement to come. The white women of means who came of age after the Revolution keenly felt the ties that bound them together, even as those ties limited their participation in the public sphere, especially after the wartime emergency had passed.

Wood et al., 314–17.

EXCERPTED FROM JUDITH SARGENT MURRAY,
THE GLEANER, NUMBER 35

Questions to Consider

1. According to Murray, how did women and men, mothers and fathers differ? What was the significance of those differences?
2. What were the consequences or implications of those differences?

The trust reposed in parents and preceptors, is indeed important; the character of the rising generation is in their gift, and the peace or anarchy of society must result from them. When we consider how few parents are endowed by nature, or qualified by improvement, for the judicious discharge of duties so essential, we are almost ready to give our voice in favour of that plan, which, in a certain celebrated community, placed their youth under the tutelage of the State, committing their education to persons deliberately chosen, and properly qualified for their high office. Yet, against this arrangement, the authority derived from the Father of the universe, forcibly pleads! The feelings of the parent indignantly revolt; and my right to direct my own child, is, in my own estimation, unquestionable. Well then, there remains but one remedy—Let the cultivation of the minds of the man and woman, in miniature, be of that description which will, in future, enable them to assume with advantage, the guardianship of their descendants.

Much, in this momentous department, depends on female administration; and the mother, or the woman to whom she may delegate her office, will imprint on the opening mind, characters, ideas and conclusions, which time, in all its variety of vicissitudes, will never be able to erase.

Surely then, it is politic to bestow upon the education of girls the most exact attention: Let them be able to converse correctly and elegantly, (in their native strains) with the children they may usher into being; and, since the pronunciation is best fixed in the early part of life, let them be qualified to give the little proficients a pleasing impression of the French language; nor, it is conceived, ought it to be considered as unsexual, if they were capacitated to render the rudiments of the Latin tongue familiar. An acquaintance with history would capacitate mothers to select their nursery tales from those transactions which have

Creator:	Judith Sargent Murray
Context:	Women in the young Republic were becoming more educated, but many traditionalists opposed this.
Audience:	Educated citizens, particularly leaders
Purpose:	To persuade people that women's education ought to be taken seriously

Historical Significance:

Judith Sargent Murray was very well educated and believed that the young nation needed practical men—and women. She had no use for women who devoted themselves to music and embroidery, and urged people to raise independent, capable daughters.

Her essays appeared between 1792 and 1794 in the *Massachusetts Magazine* before being collected a few years later in a book entitled *The Gleaner*.

THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE

actually taken place upon our globe, and thus useful knowledge would supersede fairy legendary witches and hob-goblins. Geography also might be introduced, and the little prattlers, by information that the great globe whereon they move, has received the form of that orange which so pleasingly regales their palate, would, ere they were aware, be ushered to the avenues of instruction. Astronomy too may lend its aid; the blazing fire may represent the sun, and the little bird revolving to its flame, on which they so impatiently wait to feast, under the direction of the well informed and judicious tutoress, may gradually account for light and heat, the grateful vicissitudes of night and day, with the alternate succession of the seasons; and thus would the talk of the future preceptor be rendered easy, a thirst for knowledge created, and the threshold of wisdom strewed with flowers.

Judith Sargent Murray, *The Gleaner, Number XXXV: Sentiments on Education* (1792–94) (Schenectady, N.Y.: Union College Press, 1992), 287–88.

THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE

RETURN FROM A BOARDING SCHOOL

Questions to Consider

1. How did the artist position the figures and use their postures to make a point about women's education?
2. Which of the objects in the drawing are utilitarian and which are not? How are they positioned in relation to the young, educated woman? Why?

In this engraving, from 1802, the young woman home from boarding school is seated at the right. Her parents are looking over the bill for her tuition on the left.



Item 1521

Unknown, RETURN FROM A BOARDING SCHOOL (1802).
Analectic Magazine, November 1802.

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 46

Creator:	Unknown
Context:	Early in the nineteenth century, more and more women were leaving home to pursue education at boarding schools.
Audience:	The general citizenry
Purpose:	To comment on the growing number of women who were becoming educated

Historical Significance:

In the decades following the American Revolution, educational opportunities for well-to-do women multiplied, including many private academies. Such schools emphasized art and other activities that people of the time considered feminine, as well as aspects of education that young men received.

3. Forming Free Black Communities

[Unlike white women, who negotiated with fathers and husbands as they sought more rights, free African Americans created separate communities in the decades following independence, particularly in port cities like New York and Philadelphia.] On the eve of independence, 4,000 slaves and a few hundred free blacks had called the port cities home; by 1830, 40,000 African Americans did so.

As their numbers grew, African Americans created organizations independent of white control and capable of serving the needs of black communities. Schools educated children excluded from white academies, while mutual-aid societies offered help to the down-and-out, and fraternal associations, such as the first African American Masonic Lodge established in Boston in 1797, provided fellowship and mutual support. It was black churches, however, that emerged as cornerstones of black community life, a position they would occupy throughout the nation's history.

Following the Revolution, growing numbers of free blacks joined integrated Methodist and Baptist congregations in cities such as Philadelphia and New York. They were drawn by those church's strongly biblical theology, enthusiastic worship, and antislavery stand. By 1790, 20 percent of Methodist church members were black. As the numbers of black communicants grew, however, they found themselves segregated in galleries, excluded from leadership roles, and even denied communion. Although many black Christians were reluctant to withdraw from biracial congregations, others sought opportunity to control their religious lives by breaking away.

In 1794, a small group of black Methodists led by Richard Allen, a slave-born, itinerant preacher, organized the Bethel African American Methodist Church in Philadelphia. Originally established within American Methodism, Allen's congregation moved toward separatism by requiring that only "Africans and descendants of the African race" be admitted to membership. In 1815, it rejected all oversight by the white Methodist leadership, and a year later it joined a similar congregation in Baltimore to form the African Methodist Episcopal Church—the first independent black denomination in the United States. Though not as numerous as black Methodists, black Baptists also formed separate churches in places such as Boston (1805), Philadelphia (1810), New Orleans (1826), and St. Louis (1827).

THEME TWO EXCERPTS

Located in the heart of black communities, these churches not only nurtured African-American forms of worship, but also provided education for black children and burial sites for families excluded from white cemeteries. Equally important, they offered secure places where the basic rituals of family and community life—marriages, births, funerals, and anniversaries—could be celebrated and where community norms could be enforced. By 1830, a rich cultural and institutional life had taken root in the black neighborhoods of American cities . . .

Black urban life was far different in the South than in the nation's northeastern cities. While blacks constituted a large percentage of southern urban populations, the vast majority were slaves. Of Charleston's 14,127 blacks (slightly over 50 percent of the city's population), 90 percent were slaves. That circumstance, combined with the South's rigid "Black Codes," frustrated black community building. Opportunities to come together for their own betterment were even fewer among the vast majority of southern blacks living on plantations.

Nash et al., 316–18.

African Americans in the Early Republic

Gary B. Nash

Any teacher using a textbook published before the 1980s would find virtually nothing on African Americans—slave or free, North or South—in the era of the American Revolution and the early republic. Though about 20 percent of the population, African Americans simply did not exist in the pre-1980s story of how the Revolution proceeded and how the search for “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” affected those most deprived of these unalienable rights. Nor did textbooks take any notice of the free black churches, schools, and benevolent societies created by an emerging cadre of black leaders after the Revolution. A cursory examination of pre-1980s texts shows black history beginning when the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619 and then jumping magically over about two hundred years until the Missouri Compromise in 1820 produced heated arguments among white legislators over the spread of slavery. While older textbooks treat antebellum slavery and the rise of abolitionism after 1820 in some detail, they leave unnoticed the fast-growing free black communities of the North and upper South.

The Rise of Free Black Communities

One of the big stories untold in most textbooks even today concerns the rise of free black communities after the American Revolution. Blacks released from slavery, and those who made good their flight from bondage, commonly sought new lives in urban centers. In the North, they gathered especially in the seaports, with Philadelphia and New York attracting the largest black populations. They congregated also in Baltimore, Washington DC, Charleston, and smaller southern towns. In these urban places they constructed the foundations of free black life in the United States.

Especially important was the creation of free black churches, which were originally under white ecclesiastical control, but which became autonomous by 1816. Black leaders such as Absalom Jones and Richard Allen in Philadelphia; Peter Spencer in Wilmington, Delaware; and Peter Williams in New York City became not only apostles to their flocks but political spokespersons, entrepreneurs, and teachers.

Students need to study how much a generation of blacks accomplished in building free black communities organized around churches and schools. How, one might ask, could those recently emerging from slavery (which taught slaves not to think for themselves and not to think of themselves as capable) find the inner resources and external support to create new names, form families,

learn to read and write, find employment, and create neighborhoods and social associations? One of the main themes of this quest for community was the notion that the only secure foundation of free black life was the construction of independent organizations embodying their sense of being a people within a people and relying on their own resources rather than on white benevolence. While coming to grips with this emerging sense of black autonomy and strength, students should recognize that mounting white hostility to free blacks complicated their struggle for family formation, work, education, respectability, civil rights, and justice before the law.

Early Abolitionism

Most textbooks give only casual references to how the American Revolution fueled a prolonged debate over abolishing slavery. Nonetheless, this was a burning issue for the revolutionary generation and naturally a preoccupation of black American society . . .

The North and upper South were the main theaters of abolitionism. Gradual legislated emancipation characterized northern attempts at eradicating chattel bondage while private (and limited) manumission characterized southern discomfort with the peculiar institution. Students need to understand how white economic interest and white abhorrence of the notion of freed slaves mingling on an equal standing with whites dashed revolutionary idealism, thus leaving the issue of slavery to another generation. This lesson of ideology facing off against economic interest and entrenched attitudes provides a weighty lesson for students to consider . . .

Two aspects of abolition ought to stick in students' minds. First, the freeing of slaves was not always benevolent, a simple case of morality transcending economic interest. Moreover, freedom came by degrees for emancipated slaves. They did not move from abject slavery to the light of freedom as if moving across the dark side of a river to the bright side. Legal emancipation did not confer full political rights, equal economic opportunity, or social recognition. All of that was denied and contested. Second, abolition was not engineered solely by high-minded whites. It was also produced, especially in the North, by slaves who made it their business to run away and perfect insolence to the point that their masters found slavery more trouble than it was worth.

Every American youngster studies the writing and ratification of the Constitution, but not all consider how the delegates to the 1787 convention in Philadelphia wrestled with the problem of slavery and the slave trade. Sparks will fly in classrooms where the teacher stages a debate pitting those who argue that

the convention could—and should—have abolished slavery against those who argue that this was impossible at that point in time . . . Comparisons of how Washington and Jefferson—both professing to detest slavery and hoping to see it abolished in their own lifetimes—made their own decisions regarding their slave property can also be instructive . . .

The Spread of Slavery

Many opponents of slavery (and some defenders of it) believed that the slave population would gradually wither after slave importations ceased. But the first state censuses after the Revolution showed that slavery was growing in spite of a wartime hiatus in importations. When Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 gave a tremendous boost to the production of short-staple cotton, slavery acquired a powerful new lease on life. The cotton gin gave new incentives for reopening the slave trade and insured that slavery would spread rapidly into the deep South where the demand for field hands grew enormously between 1800 and 1830 . . .

The growth of slavery amidst gradual emancipation needs to be understood. From about 470,000 slaves in 1770, the population grew to about 720,000 in 1790 and 1,200,000 in 1810 (while the population of free blacks grew from about 60,000 in 1790 to 185,000 in 1810). Also notable, the coming of King Cotton led to massive interregional transfers of slaves. The cotton revolution precipitated the widespread sale of slaves from the upper to lower South—a brutal process involving a kind of new Middle Passage that sundered thousands of slave families . . .

Life under slavery is generally studied during the decades preceding the Civil War, but teachers may have time to delve into this as part of the curriculum that deals with the early republic.

Gary B. Nash, "African Americans in the Early Republic,"
Magazine of History 14, no. 2 (Winter 2000).

THEME TWO

Conclusion

Yeoman farmers, white women, and African Americans continued to suffer from inequality and discrimination in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But they also asserted themselves—sometimes aggressively, such as the farmers in the Whiskey Rebellion, and sometimes indirectly, such as the women who argued that women should become more educated so that they could raise better (male) citizens. All of these groups stretched the meaning of equality in the young nation.

Questions to Consider

1. Why did white women tend to assert their rights more tentatively than African Americans and yeomen farmers?
2. Did increased wealth and education generally bring more opportunity for African Americans and for white women?

THEME THREE

Theme Three: The development of the United States was shaped by international contexts: relations with various Native American nations, revolutions in Haiti and France, and another war with Great Britain.

Overview

The American Revolution had global repercussions. It helped inspire movements for political independence and republican government in France, Haiti, and elsewhere. Some Americans saw in these movements the spread of liberty; others were alarmed. The French Revolution addressed questions of equality that the American Revolution had largely avoided—and with a great deal more blood and gore. The Haitian Revolution raised the specter of slave rebellion.

The United States also faced practical difficulties in foreign relations. Divisions over how to react to France and England split the young nation into two parties. In general, conservatives sided with England; those who hated royal despotism more than they feared anarchy sided with France. Neither foreign power expressed much respect for American sovereignty. National leaders faced a very different set of problems in the West, where more and more citizens insisted on taking land belonging to indigenous groups—tribes that constituted separate and independent nations in their own right.

Questions to Consider

1. Why were foreign affairs so divisive in the United States?
2. How did racial prejudice affect the nation's foreign affairs?

1. “We Are Now Masters”: The Old Northwest

Like their neighbors in the South, most Native Americans in the North had sided with the British during the Revolutionary War. So Americans lost no time in claiming northern Indian domains ceded by Britain in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. [(The agreement that ended the Revolutionary War.)] “We are now Masters of this Island,” General Philip Schuyler boasted to the Iroquois, “and can dispose of the Lands as we think proper.” Britain refused to vacate western forts at Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, and Michilimackinac on the pretext that Americans still owed prewar debts to London merchants. Even so, the British could provide little material support to the Indians of the region, who felt betrayed by the terms of the Paris treaty.

American delegations moved quickly to draft treaties with the Iroquois and the Ohio Valley tribes. Delegates bluntly asserted the right of the new United States government to Indian lands. The Congress of this recently established Confederation government instructed these negotiators to deal with the Native Americans as dependents rather than equals, calling them children rather than brothers. The treaty makers even took hostages to force the Indians to accept their terms. Ordinary Americans sealed these claims with a surge of migration into western Pennsylvania and beyond. “The Americans . . . put us out of our lands,” Indian leaders complained to the Spanish governor at St. Louis in 1784, “extending themselves like a plague of locusts in the territories of the Ohio River which we inhabit.”

Wood et al., 267.

UTMOST GOOD FAITH CLAUSE OF THE NORTHWEST ORDINANCE

Questions to Consider

1. What is the tone of this document? Does it seem sincere?
2. What elements of this clause might unscrupulous or dishonest people use to seize Indian land?

Article III

Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

Continental Congress. "The Northwest Ordinance," July 13, 1787.
<http://www.law.ou.edu/hist/ordinanc.html>.

Creator:	Congress
Context:	The new nation had to decide how to create new territories and states, and how to treat indigenous nations.
Audience:	The nation
Purpose:	To establish law

Historical Significance:

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was one of the few consequential pieces of legislation passed under the Confederation, before the new government described by the new Constitution took effect. The bill detailed how new territories would be created and administered. Though many settlers would find it too conservative, the bill ensured that territories could eventually become states with the same rights as the original thirteen.

Article III of the ordinance spoke to how the United States would treat the Indian nations that controlled the land settlers wished to take. The nation's leaders wished to acquire Indian land in a way that seemed just.

THEME THREE SECONDARY SOURCE

TRIBAL NATIONS IN THE WESTERN FRONTIER, 1789

The Northwest Ordinance laid out a plan of westward expansion that was supposed to be fair and humane. But the rapid expansion of the United States meant that dozens of independent Indian nations in the Old Northwest (such as the Ohio country) and elsewhere (between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River) would soon be confronted with the prospect of losing their land.

Map of the Western Front (ca. 1789)



Bergmann Graphics, created for *America's History in the Making*, MAP OF THE WESTERN FRONT (ca. 1789) (2007). Courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.

2. The Goals of Indian Policy

During the years from 1790 to 1830, the federal government established policies that would govern Indian—white relations through much of the nineteenth century. Intended in part to promote the assimilation of Native Americans into white society, they actually speeded the transfer of Indian land to white settlers and set the stage for a later, more dramatic program of Indian removal.

With the government's initial "conquest" theory rendered obsolete by the Indians' refusal to regard themselves as a conquered people, U.S. officials shifted course by recognizing Indian rights to the land they inhabited. Henry Knox, Washington's first secretary of war, laid out the government's new position in 1789. The Indians, he explained, "being the prior occupants of the soil, possess the right of the soil." It should not be taken from them "unless by their free consent, or by the right of conquest in case of just war." In the Indian Intercourse Act of 1790, Congress declared that public treaties, ratified by the Congress, would henceforth be the only legal means of obtaining Indian land. Through treaty negotiations, vast areas of tribal land throughout Trans-Appalachia passed into the possession of white settlers, tribal leaders agreeing to cessions in return for trade goods, yearly annuity payments, and assurances that treaty boundaries would be respected.

The treaty process, however, did not satisfy the demand for western land, as white settlers pushed illegally into tribal areas and state governments contracted their own treaty agreements without congressional approval. Again and again, tribal leaders resisted the terms that state and federal negotiators pressed upon them, and appealed to Washington to uphold boundary agreements.

Nash et al., 305–6.

3. The Promise and Peril of the French Revolution

[America's relations with Europe were of course much different from its relations with North America's Indian nations, for the Europeans were both more powerful and farther away. Yet the nation soon divided over how to relate to France and England.] At first, the French Revolution seemed an extension of America's own struggle against England, and was thus to be celebrated as an event linking France and the United States in a universal contest for liberty . . .

By the mid-1790s, however, after France's revolutionary regime launched its attack on organized Christianity, many people pulled back in alarm. What connection could there possibly be between the principles of 1776 and the chaos so evident in France? Insisted a staunchly Federalist newspaper, "In America no barbarities were perpetrated—no men's heads were stuck upon poles—no mangled ladies' bodies were carried thro' the streets in triumph . . . Whatever blood was shed, flowed gallantly in the field." The writer betrayed a selective memory of America's often violent revolution and conveniently ignored the brutality meted out in France by supporters of monarchy. Even so, the differences were indeed profound.

For the Federalists, revolutionary France symbolized social anarchy and threatened the European order on which they believed the nation's commercial and diplomatic security depended. With increasing vehemence, they castigated the revolution, championed England as the defender of European civilization, and sought ways of linking England and the United States more closely together.

Many citizens, however, continued to support France. While decrying the revolution's excesses, they noted how difficult it was to uproot deeply embedded forces of reaction. Though Jefferson regretted the shedding of innocent blood, he believed that political liberty would ultimately emerge from the turmoil. John Bradford, editor of the Kentucky Gazette, thought similarly. "Instead of reviling the French republicans as monsters," he wrote, "the friends of royalty in this country should rather admire their patience in so long deferring the fate of their perjured monarch." In Bradford's judgment, England was not a bastion of civilized order, but of political privilege and oppression.

Nash et al., 264–65, 268.

4. Democratic Revolutions in Europe and the Atlantic World

Democratic insurgencies erupted as well in Latin America and the Caribbean. By far the most important occurred on the island of San Domingue, soon to be known as Haiti. There, beginning in 1791, a multiracial coalition, inspired by events in revolutionary France, rose in rebellion against French colonial rule. Conflict quickly developed between white landowners seeking to preserve their privileges while throwing off the colonial yoke, poor whites demanding access to land, mixed-race mulattoes chafing under years of discrimination, and black slaves angered by brutal repression. For more than a decade, these black and white Haitians conducted a furious and bloody struggle against a combined French and British army of 30,000. (Though France's mortal enemy in Europe, England feared the prospect of rebellion among the 300,000 slaves on its nearby possession, Jamaica, and was eager to help out.) The conflict devastated the island's sugar economy and caused more than 100,000 casualties among whites and blacks alike.

In 1798, the island's black majority, led by the charismatic Toussiant L'Ouverture, seized control of the rebellion, making the abolition of slavery its primary goal. Six years later, the victorious Haitian rebels established Haiti as the first black nation-state in the Americas.

Haitian revolutionaries found inspiration in the American as well as French Revolution—just as later slave revolts throughout the Americas would look to the Haitian rebellion. But while Haitian rebels celebrated the Declaration of Independence as a manifesto of universal freedom, whites in North America followed events on that troubled island with a mixture of enthusiasm and dread. On the one hand, the Haitian revolt affirmed the universal relevance of the U.S. struggle for liberty and struck another blow against European colonialism in the New World. During the height of the Haitian insurgency, American warships ferried black troops from one part of the island to another in preparation for battle.

U.S. citizens, however, contemplated with dread the effect on North American slaves of a successful black rebellion so close by. The Haitian achievement, moreover, cast doubt on racial assumptions that blacks were incapable of comprehending liberty's true meaning. White southerners were especially anxious. The governor of North Carolina issued a proclamation warning white Haitians and their slaves, fleeing the island's chaos, to stay away. When Haitian officials appealed in "the name of humanity" for "fraternal aid," the Congress demurred. And in late 1798, proposals for a commercial treaty with the island aroused deep-seated fears. If Haiti should become an independent state, warned Pennsylvania Senator Albert Gallatin, it might become "a dangerous neighbor" offering asylum to runaway slaves. When the new black republic was proclaimed in 1804, the U.S. government withheld recognition. Not until after the American Civil War were diplomatic relations established.

Nash et al., 268–70.

5. The War of 1812

[Relations with more powerful nations continued to divide and trouble the United States early in the new century.] The election of 1810 brought to Congress a new group of western and southern leaders, firmly Jeffersonian in party loyalty but impatient with the administration's bumbling foreign policy and demanding tougher measures.

For too long, the War Hawks cried, the United States had tolerated Britain's presence on American soil, encouragement of Indian raids, and attacks on American commerce. They talked freely of expanding the nation's boundaries north into Canada and south into what was still Spanish Florida. Most of all, these young nationalists resented British arrogance and America's continuing humiliation. No government, they warned, could last unless it protected the nation's interests and upheld the nation's honor. Nor could the Jeffersonian party survive unless it proved able to govern.

Responding to the growing pressure, President Madison finally asked Congress for a declaration of war on June 1, 1812.

The war proved a strange affair. Britain beat back several American forays into Canada and launched a series of attacks along the Gulf Coast. As it had done during the Revolutionary War, the British navy blockaded American coastal waters, while landing parties launched punishing attacks along the eastern seaboard. On August 14, 1814, a British force occupied Washington, torched the Capitol and president's mansion (soon to be called the White House after being repaired and whitewashed), and sent the president, Congress, and panic-stricken American troops fleeing into Virginia. Britain, however, did not press its advantage, for it was preoccupied with Napoleon's armies in Europe and wanted to end the American quarrel.

Before the war ended, American forces won several impressive victories, among them Commander Oliver Hazard Perry's defeat of the British fleet on Lake Erie in 1813. That victory proved a turning point of the war in the Old Northwest, for it secured American dominance on the Great Lakes, ended the threat of a British invasion from Canada, and weakened the British-Indian alliance that had menaced American interests in the region. The most dramatic American triumph was Andrew Jackson's smashing victory in 1815 over an attacking British force at New Orleans . . .

The conflict was quickly designated a "Second War of American Independence" that finally secured the country against outside interference. That belief fed a surge of postwar nationalism.

Nash et al., 318–20.

THEME THREE SECONDARY SOURCE

THE WAR OF 1812

The United States faced compelling questions and problems having to do with foreign affairs in its first decades. In the main, it followed a path of self-interest. White supremacy and widespread slave holding precluded an embrace of the St. Domingue revolution. Many leaders articulated a restrained policy toward Indian nations—but land-hungry settlers routinely ignored these policies. The War of 1812 finally established the nation's autonomy.

The War of 1812

The War of 1812 scarcely touched the lives of most Americans, but areas around the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, Chesapeake Bay, and the Gulf Coast witnessed significant fighting.



Nash et al., 319.

THEME THREE

Questions to Consider

1. In what respects did the young nation's foreign policy reflect political divisions within the United States?
2. Foreign affairs revealed strong political differences within the United States from the 1780s to the 1810s, but the nation's leaders also used foreign affairs to consolidate and expand the nation's power. What were crucial steps in that consolidation and expansion?

Unit Conclusion

The patriots of the American Revolution had hoped that they were creating a more virtuous nation—a republic that would be led by civic-minded, enlightened individuals who would work together harmoniously and treat indigenous nations fairly.

Those hopes were shattered by the 1810s. A constitution calling for a major expansion of federal power had been approved over substantial and often bitter opposition—naysayers who saw in the document a betrayal of republican government. Even the backers of the Constitution soon split into contentious parts. Westward expansion had overrun Indian nations, whether or not they had signed treaties.

But impressive accomplishments accompanied these disappointments. The nation became stronger. The Constitution proved to be an effective instrument for enhancing federal power. Yet, in the election of 1800 one faction surrendered power to its opponents without bloodshed. The War of 1812 secured its borders and its security—perhaps its very existence. The United States was not poised to become uniquely moral, but it was quickly growing more large and powerful.

TIMELINE

- 1777** Richard Allen experiences religious conversion at a Methodist camp meeting
- 1787** Northwest Ordinance passes; “Utmost Good Faith” clause promises to observe Native American property rights
- 1788** After contentious debate, U.S. Constitution ratified, greatly enhancing the federal government’s power
- 1790** Judith Sargent Murray’s “On the Equality of the Sexes” published in Massachusetts Magazine
- 1791** Bill of Rights ratified, fulfilling Federalists concession to the states; slave revolt erupts on St. Domingue (modern-day Haiti)
- 1792** Richard Allen and fellow black Methodists walk out of St. George’s Methodist Episcopal Church
- 1793** Black Philadelphians nurse sick and bury dead during Yellow Fever epidemic
- 1794** Pennsylvania farmers rebel over Whiskey Tax; Mother Bethel Church holds first services in converted blacksmith shop
- 1798** Alien and Sedition Acts severally impinge political and civil liberties
- 1800** Gabriel’s Rebellion exposed in Richmond, Virginia; capital moved from Philadelphia to Washington DC
- 1801** Thomas Jefferson inaugurated in first transference of power between political factions
- 1808** Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa found Native village, Kithtippecanoe, in Indiana
- 1811** State militia forces overrun Kithtippecanoe
- 1812** War declared against Great Britain over continued presence in Old Northwest
- 1813** Tecumseh dies at Battle of the Thames in eastern Ontario
- 1814** British forces attack Washington DC and burn the White House; Treaty of Ghent ends the War of 1812
- 1816** African Methodist Episcopal Church established

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- 2 - Edmunds, R. David. *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*.
- 3 - Egerton, Douglas R. *Gabriel's Rebellion*.
- 4 - James, C.L.R. *Black Jacobins*.
- 5 - Murray, Judith Sargent. *The Gleaner*, selected essays:
 - **Gleaner XXVI:** *Sketch of the present situation in America, 1794 – Horror excited by the ingratitude of faction – Wisdom of our national government*
 - **Gleaner XXVII:** *Subject continued – Necessity of subordination illustrated by an example – Panegyric on the American Constitution*
 - **Gleaner XXXI:** *Necessity of Religion, especially in adversity*
 - **Gleaner XXXV:** *Sentiments on education*
 - **Gleaner LV:** *Advantages of calling into action our own abilities, illustrated by a fact*
 - **Gleaner LVI:** *Subject continued*
- 6 - Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840*.



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APPENDIX 1-1



THEME ONE PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 3490

John Lewis Krimmel, ELECTION DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE, (1815).
Courtesy The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Accession no. Bc47k897).

APPENDIX 2-1



THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 1521

Unknown, RETURN FROM A BOARDING SCHOOL (1802). *Analectic Magazine*, November 1802.