

Unit 1: *A Young Nation*

Lecture 1.1 • *Birth of the Republic*

After the Revolution was over, the question on everyone's mind was, "What IS this new nation?"

Building a Government

- Not surprisingly, the most popular man in the country, and the man elected the first president, was George Washington. He was also the richest man in the country.
- To help him run the Executive branch, Washington created the president's **cabinet**.
- In 1789, Congress passed the Judiciary Act. It created a network of federal courts across the nation, with a Supreme Court at the top of that network.
- In the Legislative branch, the growth of political parties formed around Thomas Jefferson & Alexander Hamilton.



Who is this?

| Federalists | Democratic-Republicans |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| led by Alexander Hamilton | led by Thomas Jefferson |
| favored a strong federal govt. | favored strong state govt. |
| saw the future in industry | saw the future in agriculture |
| favored ties with Britain | favored ties with France |

Money Matters

- The first big challenge faced by the new American government was how to pay off the massive debt left over from the Revolution. By 1781, the U.S. owed \$80 million to foreign banks and U.S. citizens.
- Eliminating the nation's debt fell to Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.
- Hamilton's first act was to create a Bank of America, which could hold taxes, pay debts, and make business loans to help spur the economy.
- Hamilton also had the Treasury issue new govt. bonds (checks) to pay off the federal & state debts.
- And finally, the government sought to eliminate its debt by doing what ALL governments do ... raise taxes.

cabinet:

a group of presidential advisors which includes the vice-pres, and the secretaries of all 15 executive departments (States, Defense, etc.)

Lecture 1.2 • *Domestic Challenges*

From 1785 to 1795, the fledgling U.S. government would be tested both domestically and internationally. The first test, came from the nation's own citizens.

The Whiskey Rebellion

- In 1791, hundreds of Pennsylvania corn farmers rebelled against a new government tax on alcohol, and marched on Pittsburgh. They were led by John Holcroft.
- Many of President Washington's advisors called for the arrest and execution of the rebels. The President ordered a calm response though, but still ordered in the Army.
- Faced with the prospect of having to fight the Army, the members of the "Whiskey Rebellion" returned to their farms.
- The Whiskey Rebellion showed that the government would not tolerate open rebellion, but neither would it attack its own citizens without serious provocation.



Why was it called the "Whiskey Rebellion?"

Across the Appalachians

- Even before the Revolution, Americans were eyeing the land south of the Great Lakes. In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance was passed in order to organize this land into the Northwest Territory.
- In the 1790s, explorers and settlers crossed the Appalachians. The states of Kentucky & Tennessee were created in 1792 and 1796.
- As pioneers crossed the mountains, and began settling on Indians lands in the Ohio River Valley, they came into violent conflict with the natives that lived in the region.
- The fighting that lasted from 1790-95 is referred to as Little Turtle's War. "Little Turtle" — or Mishikanakwa — was the leader of the Miami Indians of Illinois.

Lecture 1.3 • *International Challenges*

During the 1780s, America maintained uneasy relationships with both Britain and France. We liked France because they supported us in the War, but we still were more culturally English than French. And both nations were trade partners.

War in Europe

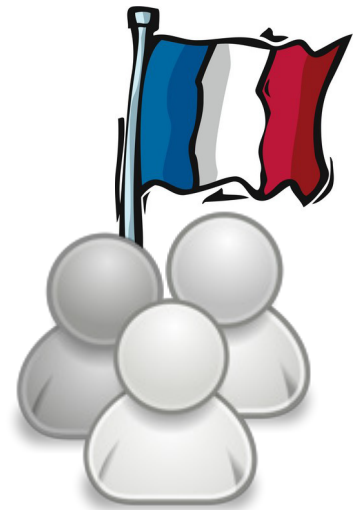
- In 1789, France exploded in revolution.
- In order to keep the French Revolution from spreading to England, the English went to war with the French.
- In the U.S. Congress, the Democrats wanted to support the French, while the Federalists wanted to side with England. Most people just wanted to keep trade open with both of them.
- President Washington agreed with the masses, so in 1793 he signed the **Neutrality Proclamation**, and declared that the U.S. would not take either side in the war.

The XYZ Affair

- Five years later, during the negotiation for a new trade agreement, the French demanded a \$10,000,000 “loan” from the U.S. in exchange for the “privilege” to trade with France.
- The Federalists were outraged, and seeing a chance to weaken and embarrass the Democrats, called for war against France.
- The new Federalist president, **John Adams**, angered his own party though, and refused to ask Congress for a declaration of war.
- Spurred on by the anti-foreign feelings caused by the XYZ Affair, Congress passed the **Alien & Sedition Acts** in 1798.

The Alien Act gave the President the authority to expel any **aliens** that he wanted to.

The Sedition Act made it illegal for people to say or write anything **seditions**.



In the XYZ Affair, “X”, “Y”, & “Z” were the “code names” used by a Washington newspaper for the three French diplomats.

Why would they use codes names?

alien:
a foreigner

sedition:
speech which suggests rebellion against the government

Lecture 1.4 • *America in 1800*

By the turn-of-the-century, the United States had formed a solid government, and was ready to move into the 19th century. However, there were still many unanswered questions about American identity.

- **Land Area...**

North America was still controlled by no less than four different nations.

- **Demographics...**

The U.S. population was 5.1 million (roughly the same as modern day Miami). 17% of the U.S. population were enslaved people.

- **Classism...**

Many Americans asked, “should the nation be run by the growing upper class, educated elite? Or should we remain a nation dedicated to the common man?”

- **Industry vs. Agriculture... ?**

Did the future of the nation hinge on modern industry?
Or on our vast agricultural lands?

- **Urban vs. Rural... ?**

The vast majority of Americans lived on farms, but a growing number were making their home in towns.

- **France or Britain ?**

Would the U.S. be better served by maintaining strong ties with England or France? Or both?

- **Free Labor or Slave Labor... ?**

Was there a place in the American economy — and soul — for both free wage labor AND slave labor?

- **Federalism vs. States' Rights... ?**

Which method of government should rule in America? Strong national government, or more independent state governments?

- **The Election of 1800...**

The job of leading this growing, energetic, and sometimes confused young nation into a new century, fell to the new president: **Thomas Jefferson**.



Who is this?