

The Constitution and Early Republic

American History to 1877

Legacies of the Revolutionary War

Birth of the nation in war

- Glorification of war in American memory
- War unifies the nation
- Gives the new nation a unifying mythology of its birth
- Veterans become powerful voice for national unity
- Flight of the conservatives: Loyalists flee to Canada & England

George Washington's stunning move

- Steps down as commander-in-chief, returns to Mt. Vernon
- International symbol of virtue
- A national hero like no other Revolutionary figure

Republicanism: a radical ideology

Danger: factions (self-interested groups)

Characteristics which preserve republics

- Independence
- Equality
- Merit
- CIVIC VIRTUE

Republican society

- End of deference to superiors
- Important new role for women: "republican motherhood"
- Slavery's legitimacy undermined
 - Slaves freed by the court in Massachusetts, 1781

Articles of Confederation

Creating a new nation

13 new republics

- Weak governors, strong legislatures
- Historic achievement

Articles, proposed 1776, ratified 1781

- Confederation of republics, as strong as any in history
- Each state, one vote in Congress
- Diplomacy, Indians, interstate disputes
- No executive: all ruled by committees
- No taxing power; requisition from states
- Amendments need unanimous ratification

Successes of the Articles

Winning the Revolution

Northwest Ordinance, 1787

Problems of the Articles

Out-of-control state legislatures

- The people tyrannizing themselves!

Shays's Rebellion, 1786-87: Failure of virtue?

Vanishing national government

The Constitution

Annapolis, 1786

Philadelphia Convention 1787

James Madison: The Virginia Plan

Two compromises

- Senate & House of Representatives

- The three-fifths compromise

Controlling the passions of the people

An Enlightenment document

Constructing a government from scratch, by reason

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

A secular document

- God never mentioned
- Religion mentioned once: “no religious tests” for office

The Constitution: Ratification

Anti-Federalists

- Republics are small
- Too much like a monarchy
- Nation would take over states

Federalists

- Revolutionary leaders support
- Coordinated campaign
- *Federalist Papers*
 - The “extended republic”
 - “Natural” aristocrats
 - Factions controlled
- Bill of Rights

Creating an extended republic

George Washington

Organizing government

Alexander Hamilton

- Secretary of the Treasury
- Strong government
 - Whiskey Rebellion, 1794
- Program, 1790-91
 - Report on Credit
 - Report on the Bank
 - Report on Manufactures

Division

Thomas Jefferson

- Preserve agrarian republic
- Hamilton's government too aristocratic
 - Placemen? Offices to supporters
 - Debt a bribe to wealthy?

Federalists and Republicans

Crisis

European War

- French Revolution, 1789-93
- Jay's Treaty, 1795
- Pinckney's Treaty, 1796

Washington's Farewell Address, 1797

- No foreign entanglements; "baneful effects of party"

Extended republic on trial

John Adams, 1796

Quasi War

- U.S. military buildup

Newspaper war

XYZ Affair, 1798

Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798

- Prohibited “false, scandalous, and malicious writing” against government or President; anti-immigrant
- Federalist tyranny?
- Kentucky & Virginia Resolutions

“Revolution of 1800”

Jefferson vs. Adams again

Return to the principles of 1776

- Tone of simplicity
- Scaling government back

Federalist judiciary

- Political impeachment fails
- Chief Justice John Marshall
 - *Marbury v. Madison*

An Empire for Liberty

Louisiana Purchase, 1803

- Lewis and Clark expedition

Renewed crisis

The fragile republic

- Aaron Burr’s Conspiracy

Republican diplomacy

- Britain and France at war

- 1806 Nonimportation Act
- *Leopard and the Chesapeake*
- 1807 Embargo Act
- 1809 Nonintercourse Act
- 1810 Macon's Bill #2

Republicans go to war

Tecumseh at Tippecanoe, 1811

War of 1812

- June 18, 1812: war!
 - Disasters in Canada
 - Success at sea
- The British attack, 1814
 - Washington & Baltimore
 - Battle of Lake Champlain
- The Hartford Convention, 1814
- Treaty of Ghent, 1814
- Battle of New Orleans, 1815

Second War for Independence

Britain treats U.S. as an equal, independent nation

Britain begins longterm pro-U.S. foreign policy

The war raises national pride

- The "Generation of 1812"

Back to Hamiltonianism

- Second Bank of the United States, 1816
- Tariffs to encourage manufactures