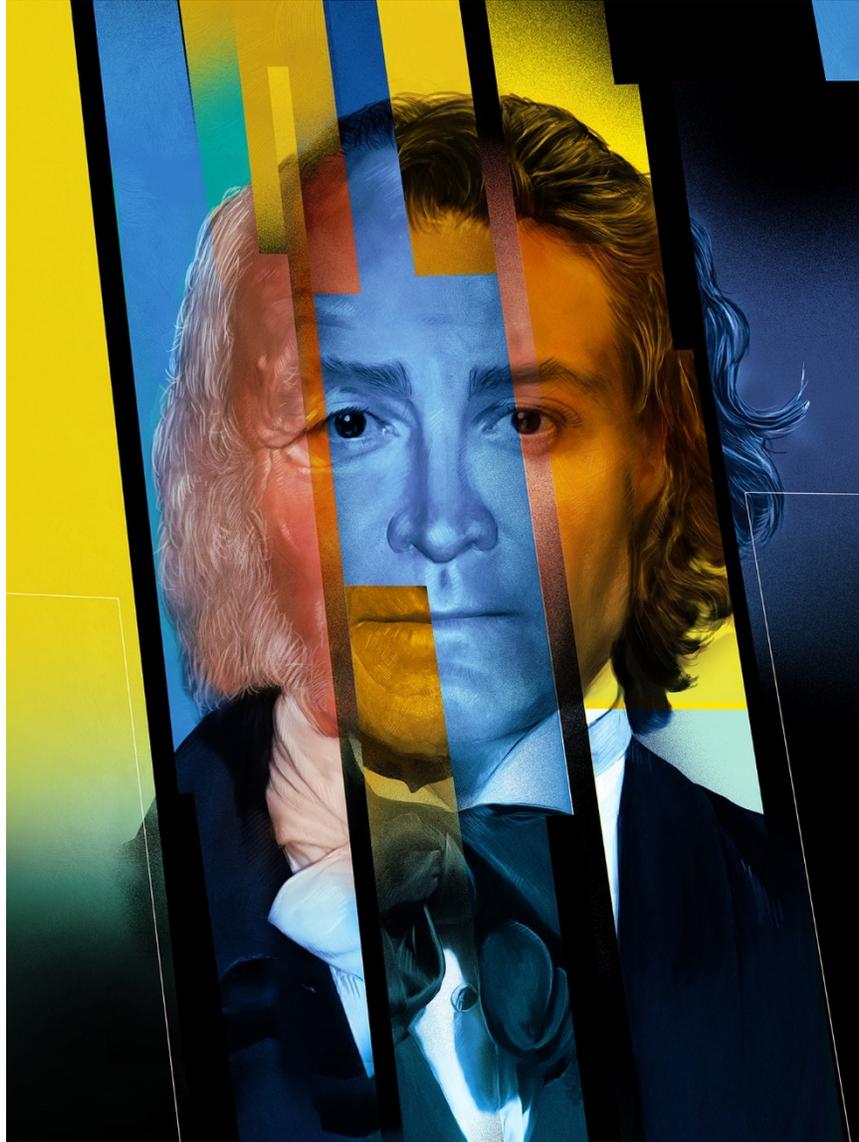


JQA

Being a Series of Fully Fictitious Encounters Between President John Quincy Adams & Sundry Associates On the subjects of Life, Liberty & The Pursuit Of A More Rational Relationship with our Government

Written and Directed by Aaron Posner



RESEARCH PACKET
Arena Stage: 18/19 Season

Compiled by Anna'le Hornak, Senior Literary Fellow

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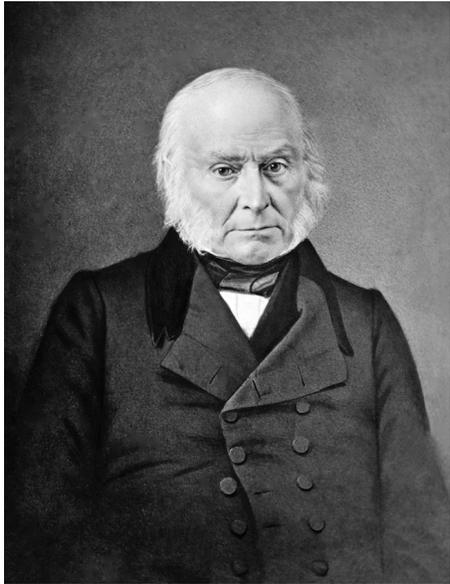
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“I want the seals of power and place,
The ensigns of command;
Charged by the People’s unbought grace
To rule my native land.
Nor crown nor sceptre would I ask
But from my country’s will,
By day, by night, to ply the task
Her cup of bliss to fill.”

from “The Wants of Man” by John Quincy Adams

Biographies

John Quincy Adams



John Quincy Adams was named for his grandfather, a prominent member of the Massachusetts legislature, who died on the same day John Quincy was born. He grew up as a child of the American Revolution, watching the Battle of Bunker Hill from Penn's Hill in Massachusetts and hearing the cannons roar across the Back Bay in Boston. His father, John Adams, at that time a delegate to the Continental Congress, and his mother, Abigail Smith Adams, had a strong molding influence on his education after the war had deprived Braintree of its only schoolmaster. In 1778 and again in 1780 the boy accompanied his father to Europe and studied at a private school in Paris and at the University of Leiden, Netherlands. Thus, at an early age John Quincy acquired an excellent knowledge of the French language and a smattering of Dutch. He also began his diary while in Europe with his father and would continue the practice of writing in it for the rest of his life. Self-appreciative, like

most of the Adams family, John Quincy once declared that, if his diary had been even richer, it might have become "next to the Holy Scriptures, the most precious and valuable book ever written by human hands."

In 1781, at age 14, Adams accompanied Francis Dana, United States envoy to Russia, as his private secretary and interpreter of French. Dana, after lingering for more than a year in St. Petersburg, was not received by the Russian government, so in 1782 Adams joined his father in Paris, stopping in the Netherlands on his way. While there, John Quincy acted informally as an additional secretary to the American commissioners in the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris that concluded the American Revolution. After that, John Quincy returned to Massachusetts and began an education at Harvard College, graduating in 1787. He then studied law at Newburyport under the tutelage of Theophilus Parsons, and in 1790 was admitted to the bar association in Boston. While struggling to establish a practice, John Quincy wrote a series of articles for the newspapers in which he controverted some of the doctrines in Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man". In another later series he ably supported the neutrality policy of George Washington's administration as it faced the war that broke out between France and England in 1793. These articles were brought to President Washington's attention and resulted in Adams's appointment as U.S. minister to the Netherlands in May 1794.

At the time, the Hague was the best diplomatic listening post in Europe for the War of the First Coalition against Revolutionary France. John Quincy's official dispatches to the Secretary of State and his informal letters to his father, who was then the Vice President, kept the government well informed of the diplomatic activities and wars of Europe and the danger of becoming involved in the European vortex. These letters were also read by President Washington; some of Adams' phrases, in fact, appeared in Washington's Farewell Address of 1796. During the absence of Thomas Pinckney, the regular United States minister to Great Britain, Adams transacted public business in London with the British Foreign Office relating to the ratification of

the Jay Treaty of 1794 between the United States and Great Britain. In 1796 Washington, who came to regard young Adams as the ablest officer in the foreign service, appointed him minister to Portugal, but before his departure his father became President and changed the young diplomat's destination to Prussia.

John Quincy Adams got married in London in 1797, on the eve of his departure for Berlin, to Louisa Catherine Johnson (Louisa Adams), daughter of a United States consul and an Englishwoman. Adams had first met her when he was 12 years old and his father was minister to France. Adams could see that, in marrying a rich heiress like Louisa Johnson, he might be able to enjoy the leisure to pursue a career as a writer, but her family suffered business reverses and declared bankruptcy only a few weeks after the wedding.

The union had many stormy moments. Adams was cold and often depressed, and he admitted that his political adversaries regarded him as a "gloomy misanthropist" and "unsocial savage." His wife is said to have regretted her marriage into the Adams family. The loss of two sons in adulthood—and a daughter in infancy—may have heightened the strains between husband and wife. The eldest son, George Washington Adams, was a gambler, womanizer, and alcoholic whose death by drowning may have been suicide. The second son, John Adams II, succumbed to alcohol. A third son, Charles Francis Adams, was elected to the House of Representatives and served as United States minister to England during the American Civil War.

While in Berlin, Adams negotiated a treaty of amity and commerce with Prussia. Recalled from Berlin by President Adams after the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency in 1800, the younger Adams reached Boston in 1801 and the next year was elected to the Massachusetts Senate. In 1803 the Massachusetts legislature elected him to the Senate of the United States.

Up to this time John Quincy Adams was considered a Federalist but found the party's general policy displeasing. He was frowned upon as the son of his father by the followers of Alexander Hamilton and by reactionary groups, and he soon found himself practically powerless as an unpopular member of an unpopular minority. In truth, he was not then, and indeed never was, a strict party man; all through his life, ever aspiring to higher public service, he considered himself a "man of my whole country." In December 1807, Adams supported President Jefferson's suggestion of an embargo to essentially stop all commerce with other nations (an attempt to gain British recognition of American rights) and vigorously urged instant action, saying: "The President has recommended the measure on his high responsibility. I would not consider, I would not deliberate; I would act!" Within five hours the Senate had passed the embargo bill and had sent it to the House of Representatives. Support of this measure, hated by the Federalists and unpopular in New England because it stifled the region's economy, cost Adams his seat in the Senate. His successor was chosen on June 3, 1808, several months before the usual time of electing a senator for the next term, and five days later Adams resigned, switching allegiances to the Democratic Republicans.

In 1809, President Madison sent Adams to Russia to represent the United States at the court of Tsar Alexander I. He arrived at St. Petersburg at the psychologically important moment when the tsar had made up his mind to break with Napoleon. Adams therefore met with a favorable reception and a disposition to further the interests of American commerce in every possible way.

From this vantage point he watched and reported Napoleon's invasion of Russia and the final disastrous retreat and dissolution of France's Grand Army. On the outbreak of the war between the United States and England in 1812, he was still in St. Petersburg. That September the Russian government suggested that the tsar was willing to act as mediator between the two belligerents. Madison precipitately accepted this proposition and sent Albert Gallatin and James Bayard to act as commissioners with Adams, but England would have nothing to do with it. In August 1814, however, these men, with Henry Clay and Jonathan Russell, began negotiations with English commissioners that resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on December 24 of that year. Soon afterward he became U.S. minister to Great Britain, as his father had been before him, and as his son, Charles Francis Adams, was to be after him. After accomplishing little in London, John Quincy returned to the United States in the summer of 1817 to become Secretary of State in the cabinet of President James Monroe. This appointment was primarily due to his diplomatic experience but also due to the president's desire to have a sectionally well-balanced cabinet in an administration whose tenure came to be known as the Era of Good Feelings.

As Secretary of State, Adams played the leading role in the acquisition of Florida. Ever since the acquisition of Louisiana, successive administrations had sought to include at least a part of Florida in that purchase. In 1819, after long negotiations, Adams succeeded in getting the Spanish minister to agree to a treaty in which Spain would abandon all claims to territory east of the Mississippi River, the United States would relinquish all claims to what is now Texas, and a boundary of the United States would be drawn (for the first time) from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This Transcontinental Treaty was perhaps the greatest victory ever won by a single man in the diplomatic history of the United States. Adams himself was responsible for the idea of extending the country's northern boundary westward from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. To use his own word, it marked a triumphant "epocha" in U.S. continental expansion. Before the Spanish government ratified the Transcontinental Treaty in 1819, however, Mexico (including Texas) had thrown off allegiance to the mother country, and the United States had occupied Florida by force of arms.

Adams was also responsible for negotiating the treaty of 1818 with Great Britain, laying down the northern boundary of the United States from the Lake of the Woods (at the border of what is now Minnesota and Canada) to the Rocky Mountains along the line of latitude 49° N. Years later, as a member of the House of Representatives, he supported latitude 49° N as the boundary of Oregon from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean: "I want that country for our Western pioneers." The Monroe Doctrine rightly bears the name of the president who in 1823 assumed the responsibility for its promulgation, but its formulation was the work of John Quincy Adams more than any other single man.

As President Monroe's second term drew to a close in 1824, there was a lack of good feeling among his official advisers, three of whom—Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, and Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford—aspired to succeed him. Henry Clay, the Speaker of the House, and General Andrew Jackson were also candidates. Eventually, Calhoun was nominated for the Vice Presidency; Of the other four, Jackson received 99 electoral votes for the presidency, Adams 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37. Because no one had a majority, the decision was made by the House of Representatives, which

was confined in its choice to the three candidates who had received the largest number of votes. Clay, who had for years assumed a censorious attitude toward Jackson, cast his influence for Adams, whose election was thereby secured on the first ballot. A few days later, Adams offered Clay the office of Secretary of State, which he accepted. Jackson's supporters charged them with a "corrupt bargain" and turned Adams' term in office into a four-year campaign for Andrew Jackson, making it difficult for Adams to accomplish anything during his administration.

Adams worked hard, rising between four and six o'clock in the morning and often going for a walk around the city or for a swim in the Potomac River before breakfast. But, he knew he was not a man of the people. He had admitted in his inaugural address that he was "less possessed of your confidence... than any of my predecessors." He favored, among other forward-looking proposals, creating a national university and a national astronomical observatory, he wished the western territories to be held in trust by the federal government and developed only gradually, and he proposed a vast expansion of the country's roads with federal aid. Congress, by and large, turned a deaf ear to his initiatives.

In 1828 Jackson was elected president over Adams, with 178 electoral votes to Adams's 83. It was during Jackson's administration that irreconcilable differences developed between his followers and those of Adams, the latter becoming known as the National Republicans, who, with the Anti-Masons, were the precursors of the Whigs. Adams's intense dislike of Jackson and what he represented remained unabated. When Harvard College awarded Jackson an honorary degree in 1833, Adams refused to attend the ceremony at his alma mater. He avowed that he would not "be present to witness [Harvard's] disgrace in conferring its highest honors upon a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and could hardly spell his own name."

Adams had retired to private life in 1829, but only for a brief period. In 1830, supported largely by members of the Anti-Masonic movement (a political force formed initially in opposition to Freemasonry), he was elected a member of the national House of Representatives. When it was suggested to him that his acceptance of this position would degrade a former president, Adams replied that no person could be degraded by serving the people as a representative in Congress or a selectman of his town. He served in the House of Representatives from 1831 until his death, in 1848, at first hoping fervently for a chance to return to the presidency. Those hopes gradually faded.

Adams's long second career in Congress was at least as important as his earlier career as a diplomat. Throughout, he was conspicuous as an opponent of the expansion of slavery and was at heart an abolitionist, though he never declared himself one. In 1839 he presented a constitutional amendment providing that every child born in the United States after July 4, 1842, should be born free; that, with the exception of Florida, no new state should be admitted into the Union with slavery; and that neither slavery nor the slave trade should exist in the District of Columbia after July 4, 1845. The "gag rule," a resolution passed by Southern members of Congress against all discussion of slavery in the House of Representatives, effectively blocked any discussion of Adams's proposed amendment.

His prolonged fight for the repeal of the gag rule and for the right of petition to Congress for the mitigation or abolition of slavery was one of the most dramatic contests in the history of

Congress. These petitions, from individuals and groups of individuals from all over the Northern states, were increasingly sent to Adams, and he dutifully presented them, with the number of petitions sent increasing dramatically each year. Adams contended that the gag rule was a direct violation of the First Amendment, and he refused to be silenced on the question. Perhaps the climax was in 1837 when Adams presented a petition from 22 slaves and, threatened by his opponents with censure, defended himself with remarkable keenness and ability. At each session the majority against him decreased until, in 1844, his motion to repeal the standing 21st (gag) rule of the House was carried by a vote of 108 to 80, and his long battle was over.

Another spectacular contribution by Adams to the antislavery cause was his championing of the cause of Africans arrested aboard the slave ship *Amistad* — slaves who had mutinied and escaped from their Spanish owners off the coast of Cuba and had wound up bringing the ship into United States waters near Long Island, New York. Adams defended them as freemen before the Supreme Court in 1841 and won their freedom. As a member of Congress—in fact, throughout his life—Adams supported the improvement of the arts and sciences and the diffusion of knowledge. He did much to conserve the bequest of James Smithson (an eccentric Englishman) to the United States and to create and endow the Smithsonian Institution with the money from Smithson’s estate.

Perhaps the most dramatic event in Adams’s life was its end. On February 21, 1848, in the act of protesting an honorary grant of swords by Congress to the generals who had won what Adams considered a “most unrighteous war” with Mexico, he suffered a cerebral stroke, fell unconscious to the floor of the House, and died two days later in the Capitol building. Senator Thomas Hart Benton, the main eulogist at the service in the Capitol, asked: “Where would death have found him except at the place of duty?”

John Adams

Adams was the eldest of the three sons of Deacon John Adams and Susanna Boylston of Braintree, Massachusetts. His father was only a farmer and shoemaker, but the Adams family could trace its lineage back to the first generation of Puritan settlers in New England. John Adams graduated from Harvard College in 1755. For the next three years, he taught grammar school in Worcester, Massachusetts, while contemplating his future. He eventually chose law rather than the ministry and in 1758 moved back to Braintree, then soon began practicing law in nearby Boston.

In 1764 Adams married Abigail Smith, a minister’s daughter from neighboring Weymouth. Intelligent, well-read, vivacious, and just as fiercely independent as her new husband, Abigail Adams became a confidante and political partner who helped to stabilize and sustain the ever-irascible and highly volatile Adams



throughout his long career. Their first child, Abigail Amelia, was born in 1765. Their first son, John Quincy, arrived two years later. Two other sons, Thomas Boylston and Charles, followed shortly thereafter. Another child, Susanna, did not survive infancy.

By then Adams's legal career was on the rise, and he had become a visible member of the resistance movement that questioned Parliament's right to tax the American colonies. In 1765 Adams wrote "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law," which justified opposition to the recently enacted Stamp Act—an effort to raise revenue by requiring all publications and legal documents to bear a stamp—by arguing that Parliament's intrusions into colonial affairs exposed the inherently coercive and corrupt character of English politics. Despite his hostility toward the British government, in 1770 Adams agreed to defend the British soldiers who had fired on a Boston crowd in what became known as the Boston Massacre. His insistence on upholding the legal rights of the soldiers, who in fact had been provoked, made him temporarily unpopular but also marked him as one of the most principled radicals in the burgeoning movement for American independence. He had a penchant for doing the right thing, most especially when it made him unpopular.

In the summer of 1774, Adams was elected to the Massachusetts delegation that joined the representatives from 12 of 13 colonies in Philadelphia at the First Continental Congress. He and his cousin, Samuel Adams, quickly became the leaders of the radical faction, which rejected the prospects for reconciliation with Britain. His "Novanglus" essays, published early in 1775, moved the constitutional argument forward another notch, insisting that Parliament lacked the authority not just to tax the colonies but also to legislate for them in any way. By the time the Second Continental Congress convened in 1775, Adams had gained the reputation as "the Atlas of independence." He nominated George Washington to serve as commander of the fledgling Continental Army. Then, he selected Thomas Jefferson to draft the Declaration of Independence and dominated the debate in the Congress on July 2–4, 1776, defending Jefferson's draft of the declaration and demanding unanimous support for a decisive break with Great Britain. Moreover, he had written "Thoughts on Government", which circulated throughout the colonies as the major guidebook for the drafting of new state constitutions.

Adams remained the central figure of the Continental Congress for the following two years. He drafted the Plan of Treaties in July 1776, a document that provided the framework for a treaty with France and that almost inadvertently identified the strategic priorities that would shape American foreign policy over the next century. He was the unanimous choice to head the Board of War and Ordnance and was thereby made in effect a one-man war department responsible for raising and equipping the American army and creating from scratch an American navy. As the prospects for a crucial wartime alliance with France improved late in 1777, he was chosen to join Benjamin Franklin in Paris to conduct the negotiations. In February 1778 he sailed for Europe, accompanied by 10-year-old John Quincy. By the time Adams arrived in Paris, the treaty creating an alliance with France had already been concluded. He quickly returned home in the summer of 1779, just in time to join the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention. The other delegates, acknowledging his constitutional expertise, simply handed him the job of drafting what became the Massachusetts constitution, which immediately became the model for the other state constitutions and a major influence on the Constitution of the United States.

The Congress then ordered Adams to rejoin Franklin in Paris to lead the American delegation responsible for negotiating an end to the war with Britain. This time he took along his youngest son, Charles, as well as John Quincy, leaving Abigail to tend the farm and the other two children in Braintree. Not until 1784, almost five years later, was the entire family reunited in Paris. By then Adams had shown himself an unnatural diplomat, exhibiting a level of candor and a confrontational style toward both English and French negotiators that alienated Benjamin Franklin, who came to regard his colleague as slightly deranged. Adams, for his part, thought Franklin excessively impressed with his own stature as the Gallic version of the American genius and therefore inadequately attuned to the important differences between American and French interests in the peace negotiations. The favorable terms achieved in the Peace of Paris (1783) can be attributed to the effective blend of Franklin's discretion and Adams's bulldog temperament. Adams's reputation for emotional explosions also dates from this period.

Because he was the official embodiment of American independence from the British Empire, Adams was largely ignored and relegated to the periphery of the court during his nearly three years in London. Still brimming with energy, he spent his time studying the history of European politics for patterns and lessons that might assist the fledgling American government in its efforts to achieve what no major European nation had managed to produce—namely, a stable republican form of government. The result was a massive and motley three-volume collection of quotations, unacknowledged citations, and personal observations entitled *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787). A fourth volume, *Discourses on Davila* (1790), was published soon after he returned to the United States. Taken together, these lengthy tomes contained Adams's distinctive insights as a political thinker.

Soon after his return to the United States, Adams found himself on the ballot in the presidential election of 1789. Washington was the unanimous selection of all electors, while Adams finished second, signaling that his standing as a leading member of the revolutionary generation was superseded only by that of Washington himself. Under the electoral rules established in the recent ratified Constitution, Adams was duly elected America's first vice president. His main duty was to serve as president of the Senate, casting a vote only to break a tie. When Washington announced his decision not to seek a third term in 1796, Adams was the logical choice to succeed him.

In the first contested presidential election in American history, Adams won a narrow electoral majority (71–68) over Thomas Jefferson, who thereby became vice president. Adams made an initial effort to bring Jefferson into the cabinet and involve him in shaping foreign policy, but Jefferson declined the offer, preferring to retain his independence. This burdened the Adams presidency with a vice president who was the acknowledged head of the rival political party, the Republicans (subsequently the Democratic-Republicans). Adams attempted to steer a middle course between these partisan camps, which left him vulnerable to political attacks from both sides. In 1797 he sent a peace delegation to Paris to negotiate an end to hostilities in a “quasi-war” between France and America, but when the French directory demanded bribes before any negotiations could begin, Adams ordered the delegates home and began a naval buildup in preparation for outright war. The Federalist-dominated Congress called for raising a 30,000-man army, which Adams agreed to reluctantly. If Adams had requested a declaration of war in 1798, he would have enjoyed widespread popularity and virtually certain reelection two years later.

Instead, he acted with characteristic independence by sending yet another, and this time successful, peace delegation to France against the advice of his cabinet and his Federalist supporters. The move ruined him politically but avoided a costly war that the infant American republic was ill-prepared to fight.

If ending the “quasi-war” with France was Adams’s major foreign policy triumph, his chief domestic failure was passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, which permitted the government to deport foreign-born residents and indict newspaper editors or writers who published “false, scandalous, and malicious writing or writings against the government of the United States.” A total of 14 indictments were brought against the Republican press under the sedition act, but the crudely partisan prosecutions quickly became infamous persecutions that backfired on the Federalists.

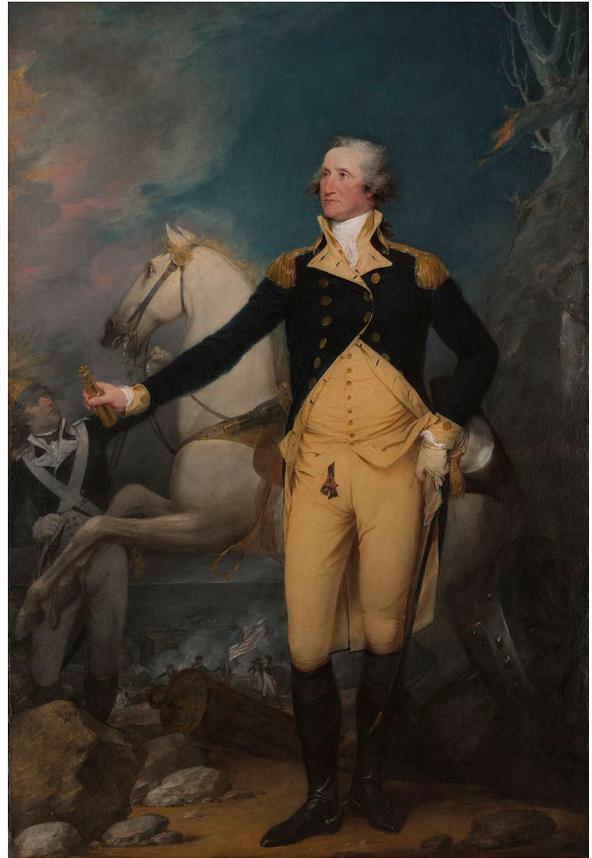
The election of 1800 again pitted Adams against Jefferson. Adams ran ahead of the Federalist candidates for Congress, who were swept from office in a Republican landslide. However, thanks to the deft maneuvering of Aaron Burr, all 12 of New York’s electoral votes went to Jefferson, giving the tandem of Jefferson and Burr the electoral victory (73–65). Jefferson was eventually elected president by the House of Representatives, which chose him over Burr on the 36th ballot. In his last weeks in office, Adams made several Federalist appointments to the judiciary, including John Marshall as chief justice of the United States. These “midnight judges” offended Jefferson, who resented the encroachment on his own presidential prerogatives. Adams, the first president to reside in the presidential mansion (later called the White House) in Washington, D.C., was also the first—and one of the very few—presidents not to attend the inauguration of his successor. On March 4, 1801, he was already on the road back to Quincy.

At age 65 Adams did not anticipate a long retirement. The fates proved more generous than he expected, providing him with another quarter century to brood about his career and life, add to the extensive marginalia in his books, settle old scores in his memoirs, watch with pride when John Quincy assumed the presidency, and add to his already vast and voluminous correspondence. Adams died on July 4th, 1826, on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

George Washington

George Washington was born on 22 February, 1732 on his father’s plantation on Pope’s Creek in Westmoreland county, Virginia. In 1743, when George was eleven years old, Augustine Washington died and left the bulk of his estate to George’s half-brothers. Lawrence inherited Little Hunting Creek plantation (which he later renamed Mount Vernon in honor of Admiral Edward Vernon under whom he had served in the War of Jenkins’ Ear), and Augustine, Jr. inherited the Westmoreland County plantation where George was born. George inherited the more modest Rappahannock River plantation where he lived with his mother and siblings, but this was not enough to maintain his middling status in the Virginia gentry. His half-brother Lawrence suggested that George enter a career in the British navy, but his mother rejected the proposal. Instead, George was trained as a land surveyor, a profession of considerable importance in Virginia, where colonial settlement was pushing rapidly into the Shenandoah Valley and other parts of western Virginia.

Washington's surveying career benefited much from Lawrence's patronage, as well as from the wealthy Fairfax family of Belvoir, Lawrence's neighbors and in-laws. Washington became a surveyor of Lord Fairfax's extensive Northern Neck proprietary, and with the Lord's sponsorship was appointed surveyor of Culpeper County in 1748. Washington's profitable surveying career provided him with much of what an ambitious white Virginian needed to make it big in the eighteenth century. He gained familiarity with the colony's back country while developing methodical habits of mind and wilderness survival skills. He established a reputation for fairness, honesty, and dependability while making favorable impressions on members of the provincial elite. George discovered firsthand how to speculate successfully in land, an especially important consideration in colonial America, where land equaled power. By 1751, when he accompanied Lawrence to Barbados, the younger Washington had accumulated almost as many acres of fertile soil in the Shenandoah as his half-brother had at Mount Vernon.



Washington survived a case of smallpox while in the West Indies, acquiring immunity to the disease that claimed the lives of many colonial Americans, but his half-brother Lawrence died in 1752 after returning from the Caribbean, probably of tuberculosis. Lawrence's infant daughter, to whom he originally bequeathed Mount Vernon, died before reaching her majority, and in 1754 Washington leased the Mount Vernon estate from Lawrence's widow, Ann Fairfax Washington, who held a life title to it.

Washington's burning ambition compelled him to seek out honor on the battlefield. He persuaded the Virginia governor to appoint him to his deceased brother's staff officer position in 1752, which came with a commission as major and an annual salary of 100 pounds. He later transferred to an officership in Virginia's Northern Neck and Eastern Shore with the responsibility of training the Northern District's militiamen.

In October 1753, Washington volunteered to investigate reports of French encroachments on Virginia's western frontier that threatened the interests of the colony's land speculators. Upon his party's return to Williamsburg from the shores of Lake Erie in January 1754, Washington received popular recognition through the publication of his detailed journal of the rugged four-month-long expedition. That May, the twenty-one-year-old became commander of the Virginia Regiment, raised to oppose the French in the Ohio Valley. French retaliation for Washington's

attack on a small party across the Alleghenies provided his first defeat, the surrender of the hastily-constructed Fort Necessity in July 1754. Thus commenced the French and Indian War, the colonial phase of the Great War for Empire between the French in Canada and the British along the Atlantic seaboard. Washington earned a military reputation not only for courage and coolness under fire but also as an efficient administrator and a fair and able commander of men. He also developed a resentment of the British officials who denied him the regular army commission to which he aspired and proper respect for the contributions made by provincial troops in general and his Virginia Regiment in particular.

With his prestige enhanced by his military experiences and the potential of his land holdings vastly increased by bounties granted to officers and men of the Virginia Regiment, Washington returned to private life as a very eligible bachelor. On 6 January, 1759 he married Martha Dandridge Custis, the widow of Daniel Parke Custis, who had left her and their two children one of the greatest fortunes in Virginia. Washington was named the children's legal guardian two years later and devoted much time and energy over the next sixteen years managing the Custis estate. He also became the outright owner of Mount Vernon as his brother's residual heir upon the death of Lawrence's widow in 1761.

The deference that glued Virginia society together required gentlemen like Washington to manifest their social status by maintaining a lavish lifestyle modeled after that of the British aristocracy. Washington especially enjoyed this lifestyle; he renovated his mansion in the latest style and filled it with the finest furnishings, stocked his cellars with vintage Madeira, acquired the best-blooded horses for his stables, kept a deer park, conducted agricultural experiments, extended expansive hospitality to neighbors and strangers, and sacrificed some of his leisure time to serve in public office.

Washington was first elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758 as a representative of Frederick County then later Fairfax County, serving a total of sixteen years in the colonial assembly. In the imperial crisis of the 1760s and 1770s, he became an early advocate of the patriot cause. In 1774, Washington was elected by the first Virginia Convention as a delegate to the First Continental Congress, which adopted Virginia's program of economic coercion against the mother country. In May 1775, less than a month after a shooting war commenced at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, Washington again traveled to Philadelphia to take his seat in the Second Continental Congress. When it adopted the New England militia army that was besieging the British Army in Boston, Congress recognized Washington's military experience and political trustworthiness by unanimously electing him the army's commander-in-chief.

Washington's greatest military achievement was to hold his little army together over the next two years in the face of public apathy, marginal state support, inadequate Congressional assistance, and a series of logistical and military frustrations. Only successful diplomatic efforts to enlist the assistance of the French army and navy enabled Washington to mount a strategic offensive. At Yorktown in 1781 he completed a successful siege operation in the traditional European style and captured Lord Cornwallis's entire army. Washington bid farewell to the army in 1783, resigned his Continental commission, and retired to private life.

In 1787 Washington was chosen as a Virginia delegate to the Philadelphia Convention intended to revise the Articles of Confederation. Against his wishes, Washington was elected presiding officer. He was then elected president after the new Constitution was ratified. The president supported Treasury secretary Alexander Hamilton's fiscal program involving the federal assumption of state war debts and the creation of a national bank, both of which chiefly benefited the monied classes, as the only viable way for the United States to restore its national credit and assume its proper rank among the nations. Even before the end of Washington's first administration, opposition coalesced around secretary of state Thomas Jefferson and his friend, congressman James Madison. These Virginia gentlemen favored state's rights, strict interpretation of the Constitution, domestic policies favoring the landed interests, and a foreign policy aligned more closely to France than Britain.

Washington was unanimously elected to a second term as president, but the nation was anything but united behind him. In the face of growing newspaper attacks against him and conflict both domestic and foreign, the President handed the reins of government over to his successor, John Adams, in the spring of 1797. Washington knew that his leadership was no longer indispensable to the survival of the nation. Washington died suddenly on December 14, 1799, and the outpouring of grief over his death was widespread and sincere.

Abigail Adams

Born to William Smith, a Congregational minister, and Elizabeth Quincy Smith, Abigail Adams was the second of four children. Educated entirely at home, she read widely in her father's large library, and the constant flow of interesting, intelligent, and well-educated guests at the Smith home turned her into a learned, witty young woman. Abigail's plans to marry John Adams, a Harvard-educated lawyer nine years her senior, did not gain the immediate approval of her father, who considered a lawyer's prospects inadequate. When they married on October 25, 1764, the bride's father, who performed the ceremony, amused the guests by citing a passage from the Book of Luke: "John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine and some say he has a devil in him." During the first 10 years of their marriage Abigail gave birth to five children, including a daughter who died in infancy and John Quincy Adams.



Abigail managed the second decade of her marriage on her own as John participated in the colonial struggle for independence as a member of the Continental Congress and later as a representative of his country in France. She played a significant role in her husband's career, particularly in managing the family farm and his business affairs. Because of her, the Adamses avoided the financial ruin that befell some other early presidents, such as Thomas Jefferson, after they left office.

As the revolutionary spirit swept through the colonies, Abigail firmly supported the movement for independence. In March 1776, when her husband prepared to gather with his colleagues to write a statement of principles that would soon be adopted by the Continental Congress as the Declaration of Independence, she asked him to “remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.” Although this letter has often been cited, correctly, as evidence of her fervent desire for women’s rights, she did not champion, then or later, the right of women to vote, a position virtually unheard of at the time. She did, however, strongly support a woman’s right to education, and in 1778 she wrote her husband that “you need not be told how much female education is neglected, nor how fashionable it has been to ridicule female learning.” She also favored the abolition of slavery.

In 1784 Abigail joined her husband in Europe as he began serving as American minister to Britain. Later that year the Adamses returned to the United States; when John assumed the vice presidency in 1789, Abigail divided her time between the capital city (first New York City and then, in 1790, Philadelphia) and the family home in Massachusetts. She missed her husband’s presidential inauguration in March 1797 in order to care for his sick mother, and during his presidency she often stayed in Massachusetts to look after family matters. As first lady, she kept a rigorous daily schedule, rising at 5:00 AM to manage a busy household and receive callers for two hours each day. Unlike Martha Washington, who had been a gracious hostess but avoided all political discussions, Abigail involved herself in the most interesting debates of the day. As the two major political factions, the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists (later the Jeffersonian Republicans), developed into political parties in the 1790s, she pointed out her husband’s friends and foes in both groups.

After John left office, Abigail and her husband retired to their home in Massachusetts. She died in October 1818 and was buried in the First Church of Quincy; her husband, who died in 1826, was buried beside her.

Louisa Adams

Louisa Johnson was born in England to Joshua Johnson, an American businessman from Maryland, and an Englishwoman, Katherine Nuth Johnson. When she was three years old, her parents moved to Nantes, France, where she received her early education and became fluent in French. In 1783 her family, now including six children, returned to London, and Louisa, the second child, enrolled briefly in boarding school. After her father’s business suffered losses, Louisa and her sisters were forced to withdraw from school, ending their formal education. Louisa was tutored privately and became an avid reader.

Joshua Johnson often entertained fellow Americans at his London home, and it was there in



1795 that Louisa met 28-year-old John Quincy Adams, recently named American minister to the Netherlands. Over the next few months they agreed to marry, though neither set of parents approved of the match. By the time the ceremony took place in London on July 26, 1797, family circumstances had changed for both the bridegroom and the bride: John Quincy's father, John Adams, had become president of the United States, and Louisa's father had suffered financial ruin. All her life Louisa brooded that her husband had never received the dowry that he had expected; in an unpublished memoir that she wrote for her children, she lamented that he had "connected himself with a ruined house." After President Adams appointed John Quincy minister to Prussia, the Adamses moved to Berlin, where, despite her frequent illnesses, Louisa managed to be a popular hostess. In 1800, after John Adams lost his bid for reelection, the Adamses returned to the United States, and Louisa met her husband's family for the first time. It was not a pleasant experience for her, and she later wrote that she could not have been more astonished if she had stepped "into Noah's Ark." Although she was never on the best of terms with her no-nonsense mother-in-law, Abigail Adams, Louisa became an instant and durable favorite of her father-in-law.

In 1801, after several miscarriages, Louisa gave birth to a son. Two other boys followed in 1803 and 1807. In 1809 Louisa left the United States again. Without consulting her, John Quincy had accepted an appointment as American minister to Russia. The Adamses settled in St. Petersburg, where Louisa was greatly depressed by the absence of her two eldest children, whom she had left in the care of their grandparents in Massachusetts. She gave birth to a daughter in St. Petersburg in 1811, and when the baby died a year later her sense of loss increased. In letters and other writing from that time she explained how she turned to reading—including biographies of women connected to powerful men—for solace. A gift from her husband, a book on the "diseases of the mind," was apparently of little comfort. She may have had this period in mind when she later wrote to her son that the Adams men were "peculiarly harsh and severe in their relations with women."

In 1814, after helping negotiate the Treaty of Ghent (which ended the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain), John Quincy asked Louisa to close up their St. Petersburg home (since his assignment there had ended) and meet him in Paris. The following February she began a harrowing 40-day journey by coach through countryside ravaged by the invasion of Russia by French armies under Napoleon, risking dangerous winter weather and thieving bands of retreating soldiers. Although neither she nor her husband made much fuss about her accomplishment at the time, she later wrote her own account of it, "Narrative of a Journey from Russia to France, 1815", which her grandson published after her death. Two happy years in London followed. John Quincy served as American minister to Britain, and Louisa was finally reunited with her two elder sons and visited old friends and places she had known in her youth.

In 1817 John Quincy was appointed secretary of state by President James Monroe, and he began his long quest for the presidency, an endeavor in which Louisa played an important role. Staging many lavish parties and entertaining hundreds of visitors at their home on F Street, she also made many social calls. "It is understood," she wrote in her diary, "that a man who is ambitious to become President of the United States must make his wife visit the Ladies of the members of Congress first. Otherwise he is totally inefficient to fill so high an office." Despite her determination, Louisa resented these visits, which she complained would drive her "crazy." Her

social success may well have helped her husband win the bitter election of 1824. As first lady, Louisa Adams set no new precedents, choosing not to follow the pattern set by her politically active mother-in-law. In fact, the younger Mrs. Adams complained bitterly of being watched at every public appearance for some clue as to how her husband was thinking about some important matter. Although she was among the first women to attend congressional debates, she did not attempt to play a part in decision making. "I have nothing to do with the disposal of affairs and have never but once been consulted," she wrote.

John Quincy lost the presidential election of 1828 to Andrew Jackson but was elected to Congress two years later, and he and Louisa resumed living on F Street. The Adamses were struck by tragedy when their two elder sons died, one apparently by suicide just after his parents left the White House, the other five years later from alcoholism. Louisa had initially resented her husband's decision to return to public office after the presidency but gradually came to appreciate his courage during the 16 years he served in Congress. Following her husband's death in 1848, Louisa continued to live in Washington, where she died in 1852. In an unprecedented mark of respect for a former first lady, Congress adjourned for her funeral so that members could pay their respects. She was buried beside her husband and his parents at the First Church in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Henry Clay



Clay was born on a modest farm in Virginia during the American Revolution. He was the fourth of five surviving siblings. His father, a tobacco farmer and Baptist minister, died when Clay was four years old, but his mother remarried, and Clay's youth was relatively comfortable. He benefited from an adequate education and family connections that landed him a clerkship under the celebrated Virginia jurist George Wythe, the judge of the state chancery court in Richmond. Wythe introduced Clay to the law and arranged for his legal instruction under state attorney general and former governor Robert Brooke. Clay proved a quick study and was admitted to the bar in 1797. Clay settled in Lexington, Kentucky in 1797 and soon had a thriving law practice.

In addition to handling lucrative cases dealing with disputed land titles, Clay developed a commanding courtroom presence that made him a formidable defense attorney. In 1821 he was the first attorney to file an *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief with the U.S. Supreme Court. He was also possibly the first attorney to use a successful plea of temporary insanity to save from the gallows a client accused of murder. Those strategies were among the innovations that marked him as a legal pioneer. As a new resident of Lexington, Clay joined leading citizens to promote civic improvements and support Transylvania University, a prestigious institution where he taught law. He soon became a pillar of the Lexington community, but he also maintained his youthful habits of drinking and gambling that

had earned him the nickname “Prince Hal,” a reference to William Shakespeare’s portrait of the future Henry V cavorting with the boozy Sir John Falstaff.

In 1799 Clay married Lucretia Hart, whose family’s wealth, along with Clay’s own industry, eventually made it possible for him to purchase a large farm outside Lexington. Because Clay seemed eager for social advancement and Hart was apparently a plain girl, their marriage has been described as a cold arrangement to save her from spinsterhood while providing him social status and economic security. Traces of Prince Hal’s exuberance remained part of Clay’s personality into his old age, but time and Lucretia’s influence gradually steadied and tempered him. They had 11 children. Five were boys, but Clay especially doted on his daughters. To his and Lucretia’s heartbreak, two of the girls did not survive infancy, another died as a child, and the three others passed away in relative youth.

The law was a natural path to politics - Clay had a powerful presence, a rich baritone voice, and the agility to speak extemporaneously. He could also memorize long texts for speeches that were persuasive as well as hypnotic. His talent saved him from occasional missteps that could have stalled a lesser man’s career. He enthusiastically promoted the abolition of slavery in Kentucky in the late 1790s, a distinctly unpopular and unsuccessful proposal. Clay defended former vice president and shadowy adventurer Aaron Burr in 1806 before a grand jury that was investigating Burr’s plan to establish an empire in the Southwest.

Clay’s eloquent defense of republican values and national honor endeared him to Kentuckians, who elected him to seven terms in the Kentucky legislature (1803–06, 1807–09). Appointed twice to fill unexpired terms in the U.S. Senate, he was a capable and diligent member of that body too, though he found the Senate’s elaborate rules and artificial courtesies foolish and stultifying. He much preferred the rough-and-tumble U.S. House of Representatives, to which he won election in 1811 and where he became the youngest speaker of the House to that date. In addition to achieving this important post in his freshmen term, Clay transformed the speaker from a mere parliamentarian into a political force whose appointment power over committees and their chairmen increased his control of legislative agendas. As speaker and one of the leaders of the faction called the War Hawks, Clay was key in securing a declaration of war against Great Britain in June 1812. He also served on the American peace delegation at Ghent that negotiated the treaty signed December 24, 1814, which ended the War of 1812.

The experience on that peace commission made him a likely candidate to head President James Monroe’s State Department in 1817, but Monroe chose John Quincy Adams, which infuriated Clay. He remained in the House of Representatives, where his hold on the speakership went largely unchallenged, allowing him to irritate and occasionally hector Monroe and Adams on such issues as establishing diplomatic relations with Latin American republics as they broke away from the Spanish empire. Clay became an outspoken critic of Major General Andrew Jackson for his unauthorized attack on Spanish forts in Florida in 1818, insisting that Jackson had usurped the exclusive war power of Congress.

Clay was the principal architect of the Second Missouri Compromise, which resolved objections over the proposed Missouri state constitution, an impasse that could have aborted the entire effort at compromise. Clay’s activities in those instances are usually described as laudable

examples of his ability to cultivate accommodation between otherwise irreconcilable camps, yet Clay and his colleagues, by avoiding a confrontation over slavery, chose political expediency over human liberty. For Clay, it was a departure from his earlier altruism when confronting slavery in Kentucky, and it would be years before he cast off political convenience to resume a commendable antislavery stance at the end of his life. He then openly condemned slavery and provided for the freedom of his slaves in his will.

Clay was an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency in the election of 1824. He clashed with Jackson amid a crowded field of candidates in which none garnered the required majority in the electoral college, thus leaving the election to be determined by the House of Representatives. The three candidates who won the most electoral votes—Jackson, Adams, and William H. Crawford—were placed before the House, where Clay’s effective methods of coalition building made him the central figure in the vote that made Adams president. Jackson’s supporters were outraged because he had won the popular vote in the general election, but their fury was boundless when Adams then selected Clay for secretary of state. Clay had early decided to support Adams because he thought Jackson unfit for the presidency, but his appointment to the State Department had the look of a cynical trade. Soon Jackson joined his supporters in labeling it a “corrupt bargain.” At first he tried to counter the accusation, even fighting a bloodless duel with eccentric Sen. John Randolph of Virginia for having described Clay as a “blackleg” (cheating gambler). Clay eventually resolved to ignore the attacks, but he was never resigned to them.

Ironically, his alleged prize of the State Department proved a toxic mixture of unrewarding work and foiled initiatives. Clay grew to detest the clerical demands of directing diplomacy, and almost every project he mounted—whether it was U.S. participation in the Pan-American Congress or favorable trade arrangements with Great Britain—was hobbled by foreign intransigence or Jacksonian political mischief (retribution for the 1824 election). His one notable success involved improved relations with Latin America, an anticipation of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy more than a century later.

The tireless efforts by Jackson’s operatives to block the initiatives of Adams and Clay resulted in a seemingly foreordained Jackson victory in the presidential election of 1828, which for a time returned Clay to private life. Everyone, including Clay, expected it to be a temporary condition. He returned to Washington, D.C., in 1831 as Kentucky’s junior senator, a subordinate designation that was a mere formality for the man who immediately became the leader of otherwise disparate forces opposing President Jackson. The Senate was to be Clay’s political home for the rest of his career. Clay, Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina constituted what contemporaries called “the Great Triumvirate.”

Animated by Clay’s dynamic presence and infectious optimism, his followers risked their political fortunes in a fight to secure the early recharter of the Second Bank of the United States, confident that its success in stabilizing the currency and controlling credit would compel Jackson to consent. They were wrong. Clay suffered one of the most-stinging defeats of his political career when Jackson vetoed the bill that would have rechartered the bank, the primary pillar of Clay’s American System, which was designed to stabilize currency and credit (via the bank), promote American manufactures (through a protective tariff), and create a transportation system

to stimulate internal commerce for both agricultural produce and manufactured goods. The defeat of the bank bill was a prelude to Clay's loss in the presidential election of 1832, in which he ran as a National Republican. That outcome continued the pattern of triumph for Jackson and defeat for Clay, which went unbroken until Jackson retired from public life at the end of his second term as president in 1837.

Clay did have his successes, however. After he lost both the fight over the bank and his second bid for the presidency, Clay addressed the South Carolina nullification crisis with his compromise tariff of 1833, which gradually lowered tariffs over the following 10 years. Although the controversy was ostensibly about South Carolina's refusal to collect federal tariffs, many historians believe it was actually rooted in growing Southern fears over the North's abolition movement. Clay was able to prevent a serious confrontation as defiant South Carolinians were taking up arms and Jackson was threatening force.

During the 1830s Clay directed the emerging political coalition that eventually styled itself the Whig Party, its very name an indication of its perennially inchoate nature. Calling themselves Whigs (a name borrowed from the British party opposed to royal prerogatives) was a reaction to "King Andrew" Jackson's overbearing executive behavior. Beyond their shared hatred of Jackson, however, Whigs rarely agreed on a central governing philosophy and often divided along sectional lines. The election of 1836 illustrated this problem when the party entered its first presidential sweepstakes by running no fewer than three candidates from different parts of the country. Clay was not one of them. The triumph of Martin Van Buren, Jackson's handpicked successor, was the predictable result. Clay returned to the Senate.

A serious economic panic soon tarnished Van Buren's victory, and the ensuing depression revived Whig hopes for success in the 1840 election, which Clay expected to be his finest hour. The Whigs, however, nominated former general William Henry Harrison, the hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe, in an effort to emulate the success that Democrats had found with military icon Jackson. Harrison easily defeated Van Buren, who was discredited by the grim financial situation. Clay set aside his disappointment to promote Harrison's candidacy as eagerly as any fellow Whig. His behavior defied his enemies' claims that he was bitter and intent on vindictiveness.

Harrison died in April 1841, just a month after his inauguration. It brought to the presidency Virginian John Tyler, who had been made Harrison's vice president to balance the ticket geographically, overlooking the fact that Tyler had joined the Whig Party because of his distaste for Jackson rather than any affinity with its principles. Tyler was sympathetic to states' rights Democrats and refused to support the Whig agenda. When Clay shepherded the passage of legislation to reestablish the Bank of the United States, Tyler vetoed it twice. Frustrated Whigs eventually forced President Tyler out of the party. In 1842, with the Whig program at a standstill, Clay resigned from the Senate and began to lay the groundwork for his presidential candidacy in 1844.

Clay stumbled over the issue of annexing Texas and its implications for the expansion of slavery, the most-troubling political problem of the age. Clay repeatedly acknowledged that slavery was wrong while promoting gradual emancipation as a founder of the American Colonization

Society, which established Liberia as a home for freeborn blacks and emancipated slaves. Clay's sincere promotion of such plans, however, struck Southerners as treacherous and Northerners as hypocritical. The Texas controversy was emblematic of his dilemma, and his efforts to tread the ground between annexation and antislavery satisfied nobody. The Democratic nominee, James K. Polk of Tennessee, openly courted expansionist proponents of Manifest Destiny and won the presidency.

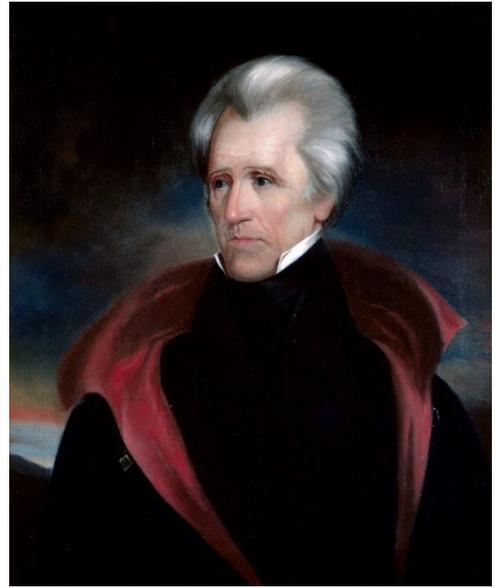
The defeat sent Clay into retirement again, and, because he was 67, it was thought that he had left politics for the final time. The Mexican-American War, however, raised his ire even as it shattered his life. His son Henry Clay, Jr., was killed in 1847 at the Battle of Buena Vista, the clash that ironically made Gen. Zachary Taylor a war hero and that led to Taylor's nomination as the Whig candidate in the presidential election of 1848. Clay had greatly desired the nomination for president but was denied it because of his age, his record of electoral defeat, and his opposition to slavery, expansion, and the Mexican-American War.

As several sectional disagreements edged toward critical mass in 1849, Clay was coping with rapidly advancing tuberculosis. Nevertheless, he returned to the U.S. Senate to stanch what he referred to as "bleeding wounds," which he feared would destroy the United States. Clay proposed a radical way to eliminate slavery in regions where slavery already existed and resolve sectional discord through compromise. Southerners insisted on eliminating much of the antislavery initiative and bundling different measures into an "Omnibus" bill. The bundling of Clay's proposals—which included the creation of an aggressive fugitive slave law—into a single bill doomed his original version of the compromise to failure by evoking more opposition in sum than the separate parts would have.

The physical demands of this last struggle for the union accelerated Clay's decline. He had long been confined to his rooms at Washington's National Hotel when tuberculosis finally killed him in June 1852. He lay in state in the Capitol rotunda, the first American given that honor (Abraham Lincoln would be the second 13 years later). Contemporaries dubbed Clay "the Great Compromiser" for his ability to reconcile diametrically opposed positions with irresistible persuasion and appeals to common sense. His work at the start of 1850 sealed an exaggerated reputation of him as a pacificator for whom a brokered political deal was desirable above all other considerations. This designation, however, ignores the fact that Clay refused to compromise on anything affecting the health of the union. The presidency eluded him, but as he famously said, "I would rather be right than be president." This sentiment inspired many younger politicians, including Lincoln, who regarded Clay the statesman as his "beau ideal."

Andrew Jackson

Jackson was born on the western frontier of the Carolinas, an area that was in dispute between North Carolina and South Carolina, and both states have claimed him as a native son, although Jackson considered himself from South Carolina. The area offered little opportunity for formal education, and what schooling he received was interrupted by the British invasion of the Carolinas in 1780–81. His mother and two brothers died during the closing years of the war, direct or indirect casualties of the invasion of the Carolinas. After the end of the American Revolution, he studied law in an office in Salisbury, North Carolina, and was admitted to the bar of that state in 1787. In 1788 he went to the Cumberland region as prosecuting attorney of the western district of North Carolina—the region west of the Appalachians, soon to become the state of Tennessee. Jackson was principally occupied with suits for the collection of debts. He was so successful in these litigations that he soon had a thriving private practice and had gained the friendship of landowners and creditors. Jackson boarded in the home of Col. John Donelson, where he met and married the colonel's daughter, Rachel Robards (Rachel Jackson).



Jackson's interest in public affairs and in politics had always been keen. He had gone to Nashville as a political appointee, and in 1796 he became a member of the convention that drafted a constitution for the new state of Tennessee. In the same year he was elected as the first representative from Tennessee to the U.S. House of Representatives, but served only until March 4, 1797. Jackson returned to Tennessee, vowing never to enter public life again, but before the end of the year he was elected to the U.S. Senate; he resigned from the Senate in 1798 after an uneventful year. In 1802 Jackson had been elected major general of the Tennessee militia, a position he still held when the War of 1812 opened the door to a command in the field and a hero's role.

In March 1812, when it appeared that war with Great Britain was imminent, Jackson issued a call for 50,000 volunteers to be ready for an invasion of Canada. After the declaration of war, in June 1812, Jackson offered his services and those of his militia to the United States. The government was slow to accept this offer, and, when Jackson finally was given a command in the field, it was to fight against the Creek Indians, who were allied with the British and who were threatening the southern frontier. In a campaign of about five months, in 1813–14, Jackson crushed the Creeks, the final victory coming in the Battle of Tohopeka (or Horseshoe Bend) in Alabama. In August 1814, Jackson moved his army south to Mobile. Though he was without specific instructions, his real objective was the Spanish post at Pensacola. In Mobile, Jackson learned that an army of British regulars had landed at Pensacola. In the first week in November, he led his army into Florida and, on November 7, occupied that city just as the British evacuated it to go by sea to Louisiana.

Jackson then marched his army overland to New Orleans, where he arrived early in December. A series of small skirmishes between detachments of the two armies culminated in the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, in which Jackson's forces inflicted a decisive defeat upon the British army and forced it to withdraw. Later, Jackson ordered an invasion of Florida, capturing two Spanish posts and appointing one of his subordinates military governor of Florida. Jackson's military triumphs led to suggestions that he become a candidate for president, but he disavowed any interest, and political leaders in Washington assumed that the flurry of support for him would prove transitory. The campaign to make him president, however, was kept alive by his continued popularity and was carefully nurtured by a small group of his friends in Nashville. In 1822 these friends maneuvered the Tennessee legislature into a formal nomination of their hero as a candidate for president. In the following year this same group persuaded the legislature to elect him to the U.S. Senate—a gesture designed to demonstrate the extent of his popularity in his home state.

In the election of 1824, four candidates received electoral votes. Jackson received the highest number (99); the others receiving electoral votes were John Quincy Adams (84), William H. Crawford (41), and Henry Clay (37). Because no one had a majority, the House of Representatives was required to elect a president from the three with the highest number of votes. Clay, as speaker of the House, threw his support to Adams, who was elected on the first ballot. When Adams appointed Clay secretary of state, it seemed to admirers of Jackson to confirm rumors of a “corrupt bargain” between Adams and Clay. Jackson became determined to vindicate himself and his supporters by becoming a candidate again in 1828.

In the election of 1828 Jackson defeated Adams by an electoral vote of 178 to 83 after a campaign in which personalities and slander played a larger part than in any previous U.S. national election. Jackson was the first president since George Washington who had not served a long apprenticeship in public life and had no personal experience in the formulation or conduct of foreign policy. His brief periods of service in Congress provided no clue to his stand on the public issues of the day, except perhaps on the tariff. He made it clear from the outset that he would be the master of his own administration, and, at times, he was so strong-willed and decisive that his enemies referred to him as “King Andrew I.” In making decisions and policy, Jackson relied on an informal group of newspaper editors and politicians who had helped elect him; they came to be known as his “kitchen cabinet.”

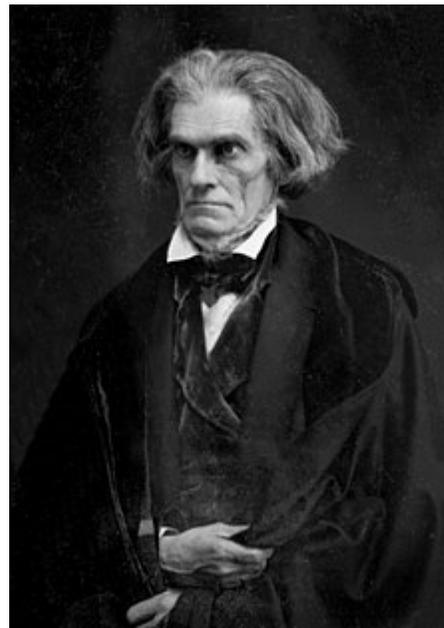
In contrast to his hands-on handling of the nullification crisis in South Carolina, Jackson was remarkably complacent when Georgia defied the federal government. In 1829 Georgia extended its jurisdiction to about 9,000,000 acres (4,000,000 hectares) of land that lay within its boundaries but was still occupied by the Cherokee Indians. The Cherokees' title to the land, on which gold had been discovered, had been guaranteed by a treaty with the United States, and the Indians appealed to the federal courts. In two separate cases, the Supreme Court ruled against Georgia, but Georgia ignored those decisions and continued to enforce its jurisdiction within the territory claimed by the Cherokees. In contrast to his strong reaction against South Carolina's defiance of federal authority, Jackson made no effort to restrain Georgia, and those close to him felt certain that he sympathized with the position taken by that state.

The Cherokee, left without a choice, signed another treaty in 1835 giving up their land in exchange for land in the Indian Territory west of Arkansas. Three years later, having been rounded up by Gen. Winfield Scott, some 15,000 Cherokees were forced to wend their way westward, mostly on foot, on a journey that became known as the Trail of Tears. On the way, during the cold and wet of winter, nearly a quarter of them died of starvation, illness, and exposure. The plight of the Cherokee was a consequence of the Jackson government's policy toward the Native peoples who lived east of the Mississippi (especially in the Southeast) on lands that were desired for white settlement. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized Jackson to grant these Indian tribes unsettled western prairie land in exchange for their homeland. When members of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes", including the Cherokees, refused to relocate, military coercion was employed to force compliance.

Jackson retired to his home, the Hermitage. For decades in poor health, he was virtually an invalid during the remaining eight years of his life, but he continued to have a lively interest in public affairs.

John C. Calhoun

Calhoun was born to Patrick Calhoun, a well-to-do Scots-Irish farmer, and Martha Caldwell, both of whom had recently migrated from Pennsylvania to the Carolina Piedmont. Two years after enrolling in a local academy at age 18, he entered the junior class at Yale College, where he graduated with distinction. After a year at a law school and further study in the office of a prominent member of the Federalist Party in Charleston, South Carolina, he was admitted to the bar but abandoned his practice after his marriage in 1811 to his cousin, Floride Bonneau Calhoun, an heiress whose modest fortune enabled him to become a planter-statesman.



An ardent Jeffersonian Republican who called for war with Britain as early as 1807, Calhoun was elected to South Carolina's state legislature in 1808 and to the United States House of Representatives in 1811. There he functioned as a main lieutenant of Speaker Henry Clay, and, in his capacity as chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, he introduced the declaration of war against Britain in June 1812. His service as majority floor leader during the War of 1812 led a colleague to call him the "young Hercules who carried the war on his shoulders."

In the postwar session he was chairman of the committees that introduced bills for the second Bank of the United States, a permanent road system, and a standing army and modern navy; he also vigorously supported the protective tariff of 1816. Thus, during this period, Calhoun was the major intellectual spokesman of American nationalism. In 1817 Pres. James Monroe appointed Calhoun Secretary of War, and his distinguished performance in that post, as well as his previous legislative prominence, led his friend John Quincy Adams, then secretary of state, to declare that

his Carolina colleague “is above all sectional and factious prejudices more than any other statesman of this Union with whom I have ever acted.”

Calhoun won rapid recognition for his parliamentary skill as one of the leaders of the Republican Party (the old Democratic-Republican Party; later the Democratic Party), yet his eagerness for personal advancement, his glib exuberance in debate, and his egotism aroused an undercurrent of distrust. Commenting on Calhoun’s nomination for president in 1821 by a rump group of Northern congressmen, a former secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, called him “a smart fellow, one of the first among second-rate men, but of lax political principles and a disordinate ambition not over-delicate in the means of satisfying itself.” To a degree not exceeded by that of any of his contemporaries, Calhoun was consumed by a burning passion to achieve the presidency. He vigorously sought the office three times. During each attempt, an anonymous eulogistic biography appeared in print; these works were in fact autobiographies written in the third person.

Calhoun was elected vice president in 1824 under John Quincy Adams and was reelected in 1828 under Andrew Jackson. In the 1830s Calhoun became as extreme in his devotion to strict construction of the United States Constitution as he had earlier been in his support of nationalism. In the summer of 1831, he openly avowed his belief in nullification, a position that he had anonymously advanced three years earlier in the essay “South Carolina Exposition and Protest”. Each state was sovereign, Calhoun contended, and the Constitution was a compact among the sovereign states. Therefore, any one state (but not the United States Supreme Court) could declare an act of Congress unconstitutional.

Although the tariff was the specific issue in the nullification crisis of 1832–33, what Calhoun was actually fighting for was protection of the South’s “peculiar institution,” slavery, which he feared someday might be abolished by a Northern majority in Congress. The tariff, Calhoun put forth in one of his public letters, is “of vastly inferior importance to the great question to which it has given rise...the right of a state to interpose, in the last resort, in order to arrest an unconstitutional act of the General Government.” To Calhoun’s chagrin, a majority of the Southern states formally and vehemently rejected his doctrine of nullification. Even Jefferson Davis, who later served as president of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War, denied the right of a state to nullify a congressional act.

Calhoun lacked the capacity for close friendship and eventually drove most of his associates into active enmity, not least among them President Jackson. Late in 1832 Calhoun resigned the vice presidency, was elected to the Senate, and vainly debated Daniel Webster in defense of his cherished doctrine of nullification. He spent the last 20 years of his life in the Senate working to unite the South against the abolitionist attack on slavery, and his efforts included opposing the admittance of Oregon and California to the Union as free states. His efforts were in vain, however, and his exuberant defense of slavery as a “positive good” aroused strong anti-Southern feeling in the free states. Calhoun died on March 31, 1850, convinced that his beloved South would one day withdraw from the Union he had labored so long and hard to strengthen and preserve.

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was born in February 1818. Separated as an infant from his mother, he lived with his grandmother on a Maryland plantation until he was eight years old, when his owner sent



him to Baltimore to live as a house servant with the family of Hugh Auld, whose wife defied state law by teaching the boy to read. Auld, however, declared that learning would make him unfit for slavery, and Frederick was forced to continue his education surreptitiously with the aid of schoolboys in the street. Upon the death of his master, he was returned to the plantation as a field hand at 16. Later he was hired out in Baltimore as a ship caulker. Frederick tried to escape with three others in 1833, but the plot was discovered before they could get away. Five years later, however, he fled to New York City and then to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he worked as a laborer for three years, eluding slave hunters by changing his surname to Douglass.

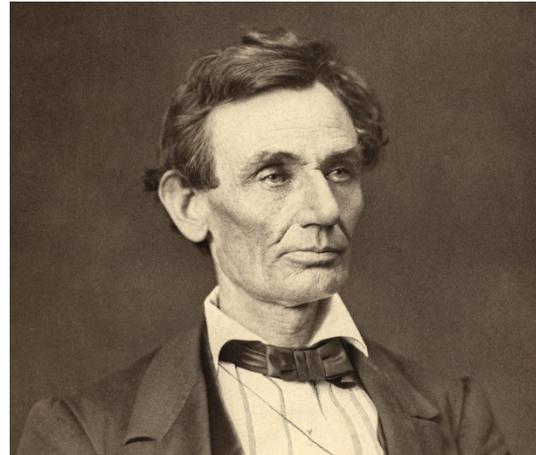
At a Nantucket, Massachusetts, anti-slavery convention in 1841, Douglass was invited to describe his feelings and experiences under slavery. These extemporaneous remarks were so poignant and eloquent that he was unexpectedly catapulted into a new career as agent for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. From then on, despite heckling and mockery, insult, and violent personal attack, Douglass never flagged in his devotion to the abolitionist cause. To counter skeptics who doubted that such an articulate spokesman could ever have been a slave, Douglass felt compelled to write an autobiography in 1845, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. To avoid recapture by his former owner, whose name and location he had given in the narrative, Douglass left on a two-year speaking tour of Great Britain and Ireland. Abroad, Douglass helped to win many new friends for the abolition movement and to cement the bonds of humanitarian reform between the continents.

Douglass returned with funds to purchase his freedom and also to start his own antislavery newspaper, the *North Star* (later Frederick Douglass's Paper), which he published from 1847 to 1860 in Rochester, New York. The abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison disagreed with the need for a separate black-oriented press, and the two men broke over this issue as well as over Douglass's support of political action to supplement moral persuasion. Thus, after 1851 Douglass allied himself with the faction of the movement led by James G. Birney. During the Civil War, Douglass became a consultant to Pres. Abraham Lincoln, advocating that former slaves be armed for the North and that the war be made a direct confrontation against slavery. Throughout Reconstruction, he fought for full civil rights for freedmen and vigorously supported the women's rights movement.

After Reconstruction, Douglass served as assistant secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission (1871), and in the District of Columbia as marshal and recorder of deeds. Finally, he was appointed U.S. minister and consul general to Haiti (1889–91). He died on February 20, 1895, in his home in Washington, D.C.

Abraham Lincoln

In December 1816, faced with a lawsuit challenging the title to his Kentucky farm, Thomas Lincoln moved with his family, including young Abraham, to southwestern Indiana. The unhappiest period of Abraham's boyhood followed the death of his mother in the autumn of 1818. Before the onset of a second winter, Thomas Lincoln brought home from Kentucky a new wife for himself who was to be a new mother for the children. Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln, a widow with two girls and a boy of her own, became especially fond of Abraham, and he of her. He afterward referred to her as his "angel mother."



Both of Abraham's parents were almost completely illiterate, and he himself received little formal education. He once said that, as a boy, he had gone to school "by littles"—a little now and a little then—and his entire schooling amounted to no more than one year's attendance. His neighbors later recalled how he used to trudge for miles to borrow a book. According to his own statement, however, his early surroundings provided "absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three; but that was all."

In March 1830 the Lincoln family undertook a second migration, this time to Illinois, with Lincoln himself driving the team of oxen. Having just reached the age of 21, he was about to begin life on his own. After his arrival in Illinois, having no desire to be a farmer, Lincoln tried his hand at a variety of occupations, including rail-splitting, sailing, and a stint as a state assemblyman. Already having taught himself grammar and mathematics, Lincoln began to study law books. In 1836, having passed the bar examination, he began to practice law. The next year he moved to Springfield, Illinois, the new state capital, which offered many more opportunities for a lawyer than New Salem did. Within a few years of his relocation to Springfield, Lincoln was earning \$1,200 to \$1,500 annually, at a time when the governor of the state received a salary of \$1,200 and circuit judges only \$750.

The coming of the railroads, especially after 1850, made travel easier and practice more remunerative. Lincoln served as a lobbyist for the Illinois Central Railroad, assisting it in getting a charter from the state, and thereafter he was retained as a regular attorney for that railroad. By the time he began to be prominent in national politics, about 20 years after launching his legal career, Lincoln had made himself one of the most distinguished and successful lawyers in Illinois. He was noted not only for his shrewdness and practical common sense, which enabled

him always to see to the heart of any legal case, but also for his invariable fairness and utter honesty.

So far as can be known, the first and only real love of Lincoln's life was Mary Todd. They became engaged, but then, on a day in 1841 that Lincoln recalled as the "fatal first of January," the engagement was broken, apparently on his initiative. For some time afterward, Lincoln was overwhelmed by terrible depression and despondency. Finally the two were reconciled, and on November 4, 1842, they married. Four children, all boys, were born to the Lincolns. Edward Baker was nearly 4 years old when he died, and William Wallace ("Willie") was 11. Robert Todd, the eldest, was the only one of the children to survive to adulthood, though Lincoln's favorite, Thomas ("Tad"), who had a cleft palate and a lisp, outlived his father. Lincoln left the upbringing of his children largely to their mother.

When Lincoln first entered politics, Andrew Jackson was president. Lincoln shared the sympathies that the Jacksonians professed for the common man, but he disagreed with the Jacksonian view that the government should be divorced from economic enterprise. "The legitimate object of government," he was later to say, "is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities." Among the prominent politicians of his time, he most admired Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. From the outset, he associated himself with the party of Clay and Webster, the Whigs. As a Whig member of the Illinois State Legislature, to which he was elected four times from 1834 to 1840, Lincoln devoted himself to a grandiose project for constructing with state funds a network of railroads, highways, and canals. Whigs and Democrats joined in passing an omnibus bill for these undertakings, but the panic of 1837 and the ensuing business depression brought about the abandonment of most of them.

While in the legislature he demonstrated that, though opposed to slavery, he was no abolitionist. In 1837, in response to the mob murder of Elijah Lovejoy, an antislavery newspaperman of Alton, the legislature introduced resolutions condemning abolitionist societies and defending slavery in the Southern states as "sacred" by virtue of the federal Constitution. Lincoln refused to vote for the resolutions. Together with a fellow member, he drew up a protest that declared, on the one hand, that slavery was "founded on both injustice and bad policy" and, on the other, that "the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils." During his single term in Congress (1847-49), Lincoln, as the lone Whig from Illinois, gave little attention to legislative matters. He proposed a bill for the gradual and compensated emancipation of slaves in the District of Columbia, but, because it was to take effect only with the approval of the "free white citizens" of the district, it displeased abolitionists as well as slaveholders and never was seriously considered.

With his "spot resolutions," he challenged the statement of President James K. Polk that Mexico had started the war by shedding American blood upon American soil. Along with other members of his party, Lincoln voted to condemn Polk and the war while also voting for supplies to carry it on. At the same time, he labored for the nomination and election of the war hero Zachary Taylor. After Taylor's success at the polls, Lincoln expected to be named commissioner of the general land office as a reward for his campaign services, and he was bitterly disappointed when he failed to get the job. His criticisms of the war, meanwhile, had not been popular among the

voters in his own congressional district. At the age of 40, frustrated in politics, he seemed to be at the end of his public career.

In 1854 his political rival Stephen A. Douglas maneuvered through Congress a bill for reopening the entire Louisiana Purchase to slavery and allowing the settlers of Kansas and Nebraska (with “popular sovereignty”) to decide for themselves whether to permit slaveholding in those territories. The Kansas-Nebraska Act provoked violent opposition in Illinois and the other states of the old Northwest. It gave rise to the Republican Party while speeding the Whig Party on its way to disintegration. Along with many thousands of other homeless Whigs, Lincoln soon became a Republican. Before long, some prominent Republicans in the East talked of attracting Douglas to the Republican fold, and with him his Democratic following in the West. Lincoln would have none of it. He was determined that he, not Douglas, should be the Republican leader of his state and section.

Lincoln challenged the incumbent Douglas for the Senate seat in 1858, and the series of debates they engaged in throughout Illinois was political oratory of the highest order. Both men were shrewd debaters and accomplished stump speakers, though they could hardly have been more different in style and appearance—the short and pudgy Douglas, whose stentorian voice and graceful gestures swayed audiences, and the tall, homely, almost emaciated-looking Lincoln, who moved awkwardly and whose voice was piercing and shrill. The debates were published in 1860, together with a biography of Lincoln, in a best-selling book that Lincoln himself compiled and marketed as part of his campaign. In the end, Lincoln lost the election to Douglas. Although the outcome did not surprise him, it depressed him deeply. Lincoln had, nevertheless, gained national recognition and soon began to be mentioned as a presidential prospect for 1860.

On May 18, 1860, after Lincoln and his friends had made skillful preparations, he was nominated on the third ballot at the Republican National Convention in Chicago. With the Republicans united, the Democrats divided, and a total of four candidates in the field, he carried the election on November 6. Although he received no votes from the Deep South and no more than 40 out of 100 in the country as a whole, the popular votes were so distributed that he won a clear and decisive majority in the electoral college. During his presidency, Lincoln navigated the secession of several southern states and the outbreak of the Civil War and led the Union to victory bolstered by the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed thousands of slaves in areas under Confederate control. Lincoln had previously been hesitant to take any action on slavery, fearing for its effect on the war effort, but issued the Emancipation Proclamation and championed the Thirteenth Amendment in a step that would solidify foreign support for the Union and shift the aims of the civil war.

After the war, he struggled to reconcile several clashing opinions on Congress over the best way to approach Reconstruction. On the evening of April 14, 1865, 26-year-old John Wilkes Booth—a rabid advocate of slavery with ties to the South and the flamboyant son of one of the most distinguished theatrical families of the 19th century—shot Lincoln as he sat in Ford’s Theatre in Washington. Early the next morning Lincoln died.

JQA Diary Entries, 1789 - 1825

November 1782

23d. Saturday.

After having passed the whole night in the street, at last, we found a publick house at the Swedish arms, said to be the best in the city; but if it is the best is not good for much. This forenoon Mr. Brandenburg came here and gave me a letter from Mr. D. After dinner we went into a bookseller's shop to buy some books. We found there a gentleman whose name is Watström; he is director of the mines. As soon as he found we were strangers without knowing us, he offered to show us every thing that is to be seen in town; and could not have been more polite if we had been strongly recommended to him: indeed I have found from our first entrance into Sweden; that strangers are treated with a great deal of Politeness and civility all over the country.

August 1783

Aug. 11th. Monday.

This morning Mr. Hartley the British Minister for making Peace, came to pay a visit to my Father, but as he was out he desired to see me. I had some Conversation with him. He says he hopes the Peace will be soon signed. In the afternoon I went with my Father to Passy, and saw there Dr. Franklin and Mr. and Mrs. Jay. I also renewed my acquaintance with young Mr. Bache.

We went at the same time to see the Abbés Chalut and Arnaud two gentlemen of letters, with whom my Father has been familiarly acquainted ever since his first arrival in Europe. We found with them the Abbé de Mably, famous for being the author of a work entitled *Le Droit public de l'Europe*; and of another entitled *principes des Negociations*, and the Abbé le Monnier⁴ who has given to the world an elegant French Translation of Terence's Comedies. As the general Turn of the Conversation was upon Politicks; there was nothing in it, necessary to be transcribed here.

Aug. 12th. Tuesday.

This morning my Father went to Versailles. At half past 12. I met the Abbé Arnaud at the Thuilleries, and we walk'd together to Passy. I dined at the Abbé Chalut's there, in Company with the Abbé de Mably and some other Gentlemen. The Abbé has travelled thro' Poland, and talk'd a good deal about that Country. For the Climate he says that for the first fortnight in November it commonly snows there continually, and from that time untill the latter end of February, a continuation of very severe, colds. He has seen Reaumur's Thermometer at the degree of 28 below.0. This is quite different from the weather at Petersburg. There, it snows every day more or less from the middle of November to the middle of January, and then

commonly they have 3. weeks or a month of extreme colds. I have seen Réaumur's thermometer in Petersburg at 31. degrees below.0. He also said something upon the Constitution of Poland, upon the Slavery of the people, the Tyranny of the Nobles, and the humiliations the Kings of Poland are obliged to undergo, and yet he said the Ambition of every one of the nobles was to be King. As they might expect it, because the Kingdom was Elective, and that they seldom choose, a King out of the Family of the preceding one, he said that in Poland the nobility had the vanity of desiring to be King, as the nobility in France, had the vanity of wishing to be a Duke. He says also that they could not Live in Poland without the Jews. T'was they who carried on all the commerce. The Nobility were too proud to engage in Commerce, the Slaves could not; every thing that was done there in that way, was done by the Jews, As there were very few other foreigners, who would chuse to settle in that Country. In the evening as my Father return'd from Versailles to Paris, he stopp'd at the Abbés, and took me in his Carriage. Mr. Hartley came and paid a visit to my Father; but it was intirely Political.

Aug. 27th.

This forenoon I went to see the Pictures which are exposed to view in the Gallery of the Louvre; there are some good paintings there amongst a great number of indifferent ones. After dinner I went to see the experiment, of the flying globe. A Mr. Montgolfier of late has discovered that, if one fills a ball with inflammable air, much lighter than common air, the ball of itself will go up to an immense height of itself. This was the first publick experiment of it, at Paris. A Subscription was opened some time agone and filled at once for making a globe; it was of taffeta glued together with gum, and lined with parchment: filled with in-flammable air: it was of a spherical form; and was 14 foot size in Diameter. It was placed in the Champ de Mars. At 5. o'clock 2. great guns fired from the Ecole Militaire, were the signal given for its going, it rose at once, for some time perpendicular, and then slanted. The weather, was unluckily very Cloudy, so that in less than 2. minutes it was out of sight: it went up very regularly and with a great swiftness. As soon as it was out of sight, 2. more cannon were fired from the Ecole Militaire to announce it. This discovery is a very important one, and if it succeeds it may become very useful to mankind.

October 1783.

Tuesday. 28th.

The forenoon we went to see the Monuments in Westminster Abbey: we saw a great Collection of tombs of Kings, Heroes, Statesmen, and Poets. There are some very ancient monuments: a number of figures in wax and the chairs in which the kings and Queens of England are crowned: they are said to be more than 1400. years old: we had not time to examine very attentively this building: and shall probably pay it another visit: At 6 o'clock. P.M. I went to the Drury Lane Théâtre, where was represented the Tragedy of Hamlet, with the Citizen. I must confess; I do not think they act Tragedy so well here as in Paris: the Tragedy was not acted, as I expected it

would be: there is I think something like affectation; throughout the actors. They lay an emphasis upon almost every word; yet in some places they speak, both too low and too slow. For Instance, when the Ghost first appears to Hamlet he starts and cries out

“Angels and ministers of Grace defend us,” &c.

and speaks a speech of about 20 lines: which the actor is above full a quarter of an hour delivering; continually in the same situation; which makes the action of the stage languish a great deal. As for the small piece they play’d that, I think as well as they do in France, but if I judge by this one play they do not equal the French in Tragedy.

Friday Octr. 31st.

Dined at Mr. Vaughan’s: in the evening we went to the Drury Lane Theatre, where Isabella, or the Fatal marriage and the Irish Widow, were represented. Mrs. Siddons; supposed to be the first Tragick performer in Europe, play’d the part of Isabella. A young Lady, in the next Box to where we were, was so much affected by it as to be near fainting and was carried out. I am told that every Night Mrs. Siddons performs; this happens, to some persons. I never heard of anything like it, in France: Whether this proves there is more Sensibility here, that the Tragedies are deeper, or that they are better performed, is a problem. Perhaps all those Reason’s may be given.

January 1785.

January 1st. 1785. Saturday.

Compliments to the Royal family at Versailles. My father carried twenty Guineas to distribute among the servants of the great folks, a tribute every minister is obliged to pay annually.

4th.

Paris. Varietés; at the palais Royal. Small Théâtre, built in three weeks time. Le nouveau parvenu. Le palais du bon gout. L’Intendant Comédien malgré lui. Le mensonge excusable. Volange, an excellent actor for the lowest kind of Comic-plays seven or eight parts in one piece with a wonderful facility. One or two other actors, good in their way. Yet I wonder how people of any delicacy, and especially Ladies can frequent this and the other small Théâtres in Paris. The plays acted have seldom much wit, and almost universally are very indecent. I know not what this People would not run to; their taste seems to be entirely corrupted. The french Théâtre is deserted, when those pieces, which do honour to the nation are represented, and these theatres are always crowded, though they present nothing but low buffoonery, and scurrility. O tempora, O mores! Letters from America when we return’d. None for me.

17th.

Paris. Italian Theatre. 1st. Representation of Alexis et Justine. Went before 5. o’clock. Could not find one place high nor low. Went to the Grands Danseurs du Roi, in a fiacre, for neither

Servants nor carriage were to be found. Le trousseau d'Agnes. Le Qui-pro-quo de l'hotellerie. Rope dancing. Sophie de Brabant, Pantomime. Just such another Théâtre as the Varietés. Plays just calculated to please the mob. Rope dancing, is surprizing at first sight, and pleases. Placide. Le petit Diable et la jeune Anglaise, very good. Comedy of Errors all this evening. Lost Appleton, and the Ladies. We however all met at Mr. Jefferson's, where my father spent the Evening. Late before we got home.

21st.

Paris. Dined at Mr. Jeffersons. Captn. Paul Jones told us the Marquis de la Fayette was arrived. Vrais Principes de la Langue Française, Synonimes François de M: l'Abbe Girard. Abdir, a new piece was announced for to day at the French Théâtre, but is put off to next Wednesday. Mr. Blanchard cross'd from Dover to Calais in an air balloon, the 7th of the month, accompanied by Dr. Jefferies. They were obliged to throw over their cloathes to lighten their balloon. Mr. Blanchard met with a very flattering reception at Calais, and at Paris. He and his companion, have been applauded at the Théatres. The king has given him twelve thousand livres, and a pension of 1200 [, Start insertion,livres, End,] a year. All that has as yet been done relative to this discovery, is the work of the French. Montgolfier, Pilâtre de Rozier, and Blanchard will go down, hand in hand to Posterity.

31st.

Paris in the afternoon. French Theatre. Abdir, and le Roi de Cocagne. Abdir is a new piece. This was only the 2d. Representation: 'tis the history of young Asgill, brought upon the Stage, under feigned names. G. Britain is Nangés. Vazercan is General Washington. Abdir is Asgill. The King of Persia is the King of France, who at the end of the Piece sends an Ambassador to the new Republic, requesting the pardon of Abdir. The Author has not given so much interest I think to the piece, as the Subject is susceptible of; and it is something so new, that I don't know by what name to call it. It is not a Tragedy: for the Hero of the piece is a private person, who is known only by that even which was produced merely by chance. It is not a Comedy, for there is not a character in it, that has any thing comic in it, and the drift of the Piece, is entirely tragic. There are however a number of excellent, and very liberal sentiments. The compliments paid to the French king and nation, are not outrés. Much is said in praise of Liberty, and of the People that defended it. Even the British are treated in a very generous manner, as they always are upon the french Stages although the English upon their Theatres take every opportunity they can to ridicule and debase this Nation. Nolé in Abdir, and Madame Vestris in the mother, made as much of their parts as they could. Le Roi de Cocagne, is one of the most laughable, and most absurd pieces I ever saw; Dugazon, delivered the part of the King very well.

February 1785.

21st.

All dined at the Marquis de la Fayette. There was a considerable company, mostly composed of Americans. We saw two of the Marquis's children; he has three; but the other is out at nurse at Versailles. His son is called George Washington: about 4 years old, a very pretty child: the Legislature of the State of Connecticut have lately made his father and him, citizens of that State. The Marquis's youngest daughter is named Virginia. Madame is a very agreeable woman, and has a pleasing countenance: She is extremely fond of her husband and children, which is a most uncommon circumstance: especially as when they were married, neither of them was more than 12 years old: She told my father that Mrs. Jay, did not like the french Ladies. "Ni moi, non plus." And that if Monsr. le Marquis goes to America again, she will go with him. The Marquis brought with him from America, a young Gentleman, of the age of about 14: his name is Colwel and his father was barbarously murdered by the British, during the War in New Jersey.

March 1785.

20th.

My father went to Versailles in the morning to see the Count de Vergennes, upon the subject of a Treaty between the U. States, and the Powers of Barbary. The Emperor of Morocco has taken an American vessel belonging to Mr. Fitz Simmons of Philadelphia. He has made the Master and the crew prisoners; but has not suffered them to be made slaves. He has ordered his People not to take any more untill Congress may send a Consul to him: and he offers to treat with us, upon the same footing that he does with all the Powers of Europe. This matter gives the American Commissioners, a great deal of trouble at present. Mr. West, Mr. Norris, Mr. Waring and Mr. Boling dined with us. I promised Mr. West to introduce him to the Marquis de la Fayette, someday this week. Mr. Boling sets off for London tomorrow. The Foire St. Germain closed last evening.

29th.

Dr. Franklin's early in the morning. Coll. Humphreys breakfasted with us, and went with Mr. Adams to Versailles, where they were presented for the first time, to the new born Prince, who received them in bed: there were half a dozen ladies in the chamber. There were three beds joining each other, and in the middle one laid M: le Duc. Probably that in the night one of the Ladies sleep in each of the other beds to prevent Monseigneur from falling out. The king was exceedingly gay, and happy, and his brothers appeared so too.

April 1785.

18th.

Mr. D'Asp, the secretary of the Swedish Embassy, came out and dined with us en famille. After dinner I went into Paris. Mr. West is still very ill: his hand is swollen amazingly: his spirits were very low when I went there: but before I came away he began to be quite sociable. He spoke of Mr. B——g——m; who with his Lady left Paris, Sunday the 10th. instn. Mr. W: seems to have of Mr. B. very nearly the same opinion I have, that he is very ignorant, very vain, and very empty. He is very rich: but if he acquired his riches in the manner Mr. W. tells me he did; he is hardly authorised to plume himself upon them as much as he does. That he is extremely ignorant, I think the following anecdote which is literally true, will sufficiently prove. I was with him one evening last winter at the French Comedy. La mort de César a Tragedy of Voltaire's was acted. After it was over the following Conversation, took place between him and me; exactly as it is here.

Mr. B. Oh; how much Superior to this is Shakespeare's Julius Caesar!

A. Voltaire to be sure was not comparable to Shakespeare in point of genius, but his play is more regular.

B. Regular! Why he has not introduced the Battle of Philippi; nor does he bring Augustus upon the Stage.

A. But if I remember right the Battle of Philippi did not happen till more than a year after the Death of Caesar, and has nothing to do in that event. So that all three unities must be broken through to introduce it. Nor could Augustus appear for the same reason.

B. What do you mean by unities.

A. You know very well Sir, that plays upon the french Stage, are confined, to 24 hours for time, to one and the same place, and to one plot for action, and. . . .

B. Oh, you are entirely mistaken! Why do you think Shakespeare did not know the rules of the Stage, and yet he brings Augustus, and the action at Philippi on, in his piece. Besides, Voltaire supposes that Brutus was the Son of Caesar, which is contrary to history; and would it not be absurd to be so strict upon such trifles as you are speaking of, and yet take such licences as to suppose Brutus to be the Son of Caesar.

Finding it would be in vain to say any thing more of the Rules of the Drama, I was determined to see if he was as well inform'd upon the Subject of History so I replied You know that several historians hint, that Caesar was supposed to be the father of Brutus, and that he supposed so himself: and any Poet has a right to make use of any such Circumstances, and to give for a certainty, what in fact was only a supposition.

B. No Sir, not one historian mentions any such a connection between them.

A. I think Suetonius says, that when Brutus stab'd Caesar, among the rest, Caesar said in greek Are you with them, my Son? We have no better authority than Suetonius, for there are very few original historians of that period, remaining.

B. He certainly did not speak in Greek: he said et tu Brute. I don't know what Suetonius may say, but Rollin, in his Roman history does not mention a word of it; and do you think he could have omitted so important a circumstance, if there had been any truth in it? As you say there, are not many original historians of that period extant. I think there are only Suetonius, and LIVY, and Plutarch and HERODOTUS.

Here our conversation finish'd. I was amazed to see a man, with so many pretensions to great knowledge, as Mr. B. had, entirely ignorant of the rules of the Drama: and in a point of Roman History quote the authority of Rollin, against that of Suetonius. But I have since found that he spoke without knowledge, even on the Subject of Rollin: for that author speaking of Brutus, says, that notwithstanding his conduct, Caesar loved him, as the Son of Servilia, and perhaps as his own. If a boy of 18 years old, can detect Mr. B. in such gross errors, in Questions so plain, and so universally understood: how empty must he appear before a person, of ripe Judgment, and deep knowledge.

Should anyone see this he might say what has Mr. B. done to you to make you treat him so? I answer, nothing but what he does to every body else. He is as vain and self sufficient as he is ignorant: and assumes airs of superiority, not only over me (which would not perhaps be improper) but over persons of much more real merit than he is, or than he ever will be, if I am not much mistaken. He has never done me any harm; nor has he ever had it, (thank god) in his power to hurt me, but I have no obligations to him, nor ever will, if I can help it. The only knowledge he appears to possess well, is Commercial: of that he has had sufficient to make a very considerable fortune, which has turn'd the little brains he had.

Those who their ignorance confest

I ne'er offended with a jest.

But laugh to hear an idiot quote

A verse from Horace learnt by rote.

When I came home from Paris, I found Letters for me from Mr. Dumas and C. Storer.

26th.

I went in the morning to the Sweedish Ambassador's Hôtel to go with Mr. d'Asp, and see the Abbé Grenet, but I was too late and Mr. d'Asp was gone out, I went to see Mr. Jarvis: and afterwards Count d'Ouradou, at the hôtel de Nassau, Ruë de la Harpe. We agreed to go together to l'Orient. Went to see West, but did not find him at home. Walk'd in the Palais Royal, where I met Mr. Williamos; and as I had sent our carriage back to Auteuil and, it was too late to walk home, I went with him and dined at Mr. Jefferson's. A few minutes after Dinner, Some Letters

came, in from America, and I was inform'd by Mr. J. that the Packet le Courier de L'Orient, which sail'd from New York, the 23d of March, is arrived: Mr. J. and Coll. Humphreys had Letters from Genl. Washington, and a Letter from Mr. Gerry, of Feby. 25th. says, Mr. Adams, is appointed Minister to the Court of London.

I believe he will promote the Interests of the United States, as much as any man: but I fear his Duty will induce him to make exertions which may be detrimental to his Health: I wish however it may be otherwise. Were I now to go with him, probably my immediate Satisfaction, might be greater than it will be in returning to America. After having been travelling for these seven years, almost all over Europe, and having been in the world and among Company for three: to return and spend one or two years in the Pale of a College, subjected to all the rules, which I have so long been freed from: then to plunge into the Dry and tedious study of the law; for three years, and afterwards not expect, (however good an Opinion I may have of myself), to bring myself into Notice, under three or four years more; if ever: it is really a Prospect some what discouraging for a youth of my Ambition (for I have Ambition, though I hope its object is laudable).

But still ... Oh! how wretched

Is that poor Man, that hangs on Princes favours.

or on those of any body else. I am determin'd that as long as I shall be able to get my own living, in an honorable manner, I will depend upon no one. My father has been so much taken up all his lifetime, with the Interests of the public, that his own fortune has suffered by it: So that his children will have to provide for themselves; which I shall never be able to do, if I loiter away my precious time in Europe; and shun going home untill I am forced to it. With an ordinary share of common Sense, which I hope I enjoy, at least in America, I can live independent and free, and rather than live other wise, I would wish to die, before, the time, when I shall be left at my own Discretion. I have before me a striking example, of the distressing and humiliating Situation a person is reduced to by adopting a different line of Conduct and I am determin'd not to fall into the same error.

I came out to Auteuil in the afternoon, with Mr. Jefferson, in his Carriage. Found Mr. Jarvis there. Dr. Franklin has a Letter by the last packet, dated March 22d.

May 1785.

3d.

Mr. A: went to Versailles, it being Ambassador's Day. As he was passing through an entry at the Count de Vergennes's, a Servant presented him a small canister, containing perhaps a little more than half a pound of tea, and ask'd him if he did not want some very excellent tea, that had come through Russia, by land from China; my father could not Refuse it, and enquired the price. Un Louis, Monsieur, said the fellow very coolly; and in that manner he put every one of the foreign Ministers to contri-bution, even in the House, of the King of France's prime Minister. I don't

know whether such practices correspond, with their ideas of dignity; if so they are very different from mine.

July 1785.

4th.

Calm weather continually: and so warm that it is almost insupportable. We still esteem ourselves 50 leagues East of the Bermudas. I wish'd very much to arrive in America before this day, which is the greatest day in the year, for every true American. The anniversary of our Independence. May heaven preserve it: and may the world still see

A State where liberty shall still survive
In these late times, this evening of mankind
When Athens, Rome and Carthage are no more
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolv'd.

August 1785.

5th.

I went and spent some time with Mr. Fontfreyde, in the forenoon. Dined with a large Company at the President's. It was his musical day, for once a week, he has Company, some of whom sing after dinner. Mr. Young, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Sayre, Mr. Read and General Howe, all sung. The first is the best singer, but I was wishing to be gone, for a long time after dinner. It was however between 7 and 8 o'clock before we could get away. We then went, and drank tea, with Miss Eccles, who again play'd admirably well upon the harpsichord. Miss Riché sung again the two songs, she favoured us with last evening: she sung so prettily that when I return'd home, instead of continuing my Satirical lines, I immediately began upon the most insipid stile of panegyric: but a few days will cure me.

8th.

I went out with Mr. Harrison, Mrs. Swift, and Miss Riché, to Content to see Lady Wheate,¹ who is one of the most reputed beauties in the Town. I own I do not admire her so much as I expected to, before I saw her. She is like too many, of the handsome Ladies here, very affected. The most pleasing Characters here, are of those who are pretty without enjoying any share of beauty. When shall I see a beauty without any conceit? Dined at the Presidents with a large Company among others Genl. Greene, Governor Clinton, Mr. Osgood and Mr. W. Livingston.² In the evening I went and drank tea, at Miss S. Livingston's, where there was a large Company of Ladies. Miss Riché, sung again and repeated the former songs. Notwithstanding the admiration

my friend Harrison has for her, I think upon closer examination, that she is not free from that affectation which some Ladies here seem to take for grace.

I endeavoured to excuse myself to Miss Livingston for not having waited on her before, but she said I should do better if I made no apology at all. Madam de Marbois too appeared very cold, and I fear I have offended many persons by not waiting on them, which I have not been able to do. Miss van Berkel was sociable.

26th.

A tous les coeurs bien nés que la patrie est chere

Qu'avec ravissement je revois ce séjour.

No person who has not experienced it can conceive how much pleasure there is in returning to our Country after an absence of 6 years especially when it was left at the time of life, that I did, when I went last to Europe. The most trifling objects now appear interesting to me: in the morning I went to see my uncle Smith, but he was not at home. I saw my aunt and Mr. Smith, who went with me to the Treasury office, where I found my uncle Cranch. I was introduced to a number of gentlemen, and met several of my old acquaintances. I delivered a Letter to Mr. Breck⁵ from the Marquis. Dined at Mr. Cranch's lodgings, where I found my Cousins Betsey⁶ and Lucy. In the afternoon they went to Cambridge, and I followed them there with Mr. Smith. At College I met my Cousin, and brother Charles, who entered about 6 weeks ago. We spent an hour with them, and were then obliged to return to Boston. I lodged at Deacon Smith's.

I shall not attempt to describe the different Sensations I experienced in meeting after so long an absence, the friends of my childhood, and a number of my nearest and dearest relations. This day will be forever too deeply rooted in my Memory, to require any written account of it. It has been one of the happiest I ever knew.

September 1785.

23d.

At 9 this morning I went to see about getting my trunks to Haverhill: Mr. Cranch told me; they have been put on board a vessel, that will sail in two or three days for Newbury Port and from thence, a conveyance will easily be found for sending them to Haverhill. I visited Mr. Toscan; and was afterwards introduced to Mr. Hughes, Mr. Lincoln, and Mr. Gardiner, all three Lawyers. The last, on the 4th. of July, pronounced the most curious, blank verse discourse, that I ever read. He shows beyond all dispute that he is a great admirer of blank verse. Some critics pretend that blank verse is the most noble, and most perfect, in English Poetry. Mr. G: opinion on that subject seems to go further still. He seems to think that it is preferable even upon common occasions to prose, and when I was introduced, I expected to hear him break out into some Rhapsody.

Dined at the French Consuls, and in the afternoon went with him and visited the Governor, and Mr. Russel: I there saw Mr. Seaver who arrived yesterday in a vessel from St. Petersburg. He inform'd us that the Russian Army in time of Peace was composed of 450,000 men. This was a piece of news to me, and would be I fancy to a Russian: I went with the Consul and Mr. Serane, and drank tea at Mr. Tudor's,² who was very polite. Mr. Serane, sung, play'd on the violin, and on the guittar; this gentleman, though only nineteen years old, is quite a virtuose. I spent the evening, and supped at Mr. B. Austin's.³ I was again, unwillingly obliged to play all the evening at Whist. I used formerly to be very fond of cards, and could spend evening after evening at play. Whence my present aversion to them arises I know not: but wish it may continue; for I think, that if playing cards is excusable in a woman, it is, for a man, but a miserable loss of time at best. When we rose from Supper it was so late, that I supposed Deacon Smith's family would be in bed: and went with Mr. Tyler who lodges at Mr. Palmer's. It was 12 before we retired.

October 1785.

11th.

The weather begins to grow Cold: and the winter is advancing with hasty strides. In the afternoon I went down to Mr. White's, but they were all gone out: Went and spent half an hour at Mr. Blodget's, then return'd home. I accompanied the inseparables Nancy, and Debby, to Judge Sargeants, where we remain'd all the evening. Those two girls in particular, ate such a quantity of peaches, as astonished me. I should not have thought that five persons could devour so many in one Evening. From thence we went to see Miss Perkins home, and after staying there a quarter of an hour, retired to our Respective Stations. Mr. Osgood accompanied Miss Nancy home, and I Miss T. Sargeant, who spends a great part of her time with Mrs. Payson her Sister, who is in poor Health. I expect to hear to morrow that Miss Nancy cannot leave her Chamber. Oh! Prudence, what a charming virtue art thou! But how few are so happy as to possess thee!

19th.

We went out between 9 and 10 this morning, in order to take, a walk, and look at the troops, for this day there happened to be a regimental muster here, and training day for the militia. When we went out we had no idea of being gone more than an hour, but it was near two before we return'd. 10 Companies from Newbury, march'd about two miles out, and met 7 others from Almesbury [, Start insertion,Amesbury, End,]. There were in all, I imagine about a thousand men under arms. All the officers and the artillery Company composed of 39 men, were in a dark blue uniform, faced with scarlet: the troops were not in any uniform. They paraded tolerably well, all things consider'd, though it would take I imagine considerable time to make Prussian troops of them. The Coll. Lieutt. Coll. and Adjutant were on white horses. There was none of the officers that appeared so much to advantage as the adjutant, a joiner by trade, named Herriman. Many officers who have from their childhood brought up in regular armies, would not appear more graceful or show more dignity at a parade, than this person did. Some men whatever their Station

in Life may be, have a natural grace and elegance, which never leave them; others though possess'd of the highest advantages, and train'd from their Infancy to the Science of politeness, can never acquire that easy agreeable manner which has so great a tendency:

To make men happy and to keep them so.

When the two parties had join'd after a short pause, they march'd all together back into the town, and we left them. We dined at Mr. Dalton's, but he was so unwell, that he could not favour us with his Company. He caught yesterday a bad cold, at New town, a seat which he owns, about half way between this and Haverhill. Mr. Symmes dined with us, a young Gentleman, whose manners are very easy and agreeable. At about 4. we proceeded in the order we went yesterday, to return home; we got to Mr. White's house, just before dark. I came from the ferry on horseback. Spent the Evening very agreeably, there, and return'd home, at about 9 o'clock. Found Mr. Thaxter there, but he soon after went away.

November 1785.

3d.

Mr. Shaw went to the lecture of a neighbouring brother, and dined out; I was pretty close, all day, and did not go out of the house. Events cannot be interesting, when one is in this Situation, and few Reflections can be made, by one entirely employ'd in acquiring those of others.

I feel a degree of Melancholy which may be owing to my having been so much confined these three or four days, but I rather imagine proceeds from another Cause. When our Reason is at variance with our heart, the mind cannot be in a pleasing State: I have heretofore more than once, been obliged to exert all my Resolution, to keep myself free from a Passion, which I could not indulge, and which would have made me miserable had I not overcome it. I have escaped till now more perhaps owing to my good Fortune, than to my own firmness, and now again, I am put to a trial. I have still more Reason, than I ever had, to repress my feelings; but I am also perswaded, that I never was in greater danger; one Circumstance there is, which gives me hopes; and if it takes place, will put an end to my danger and my fears.

12th.

All day at home. Miss Nancy came in the Evening, but did not stay more than half an hour: she has been since Thursday morning, at Mr. Duncan's, and proposes staying there, all next Week. Though I cannot conceal from myself, that this gives me pain at present, yet I can sincerely say, I wish she would in this manner keep away, week after week from this house, untill I leave it: In the Evening, I was reminded, of the great disadvantages, a youth must labour under, who suffers himself to be subdued by the tender passion. I needed not the Caution; and shew that I was fully sensible of it. I consider it the greatest misfortune; that can befall a young man to be in Love. Does not Reason alone suffice to show that, when the Passions are high and the blood is warm, it is impossible to make a Choice, with the prudence necessary upon such an occasion. Do we not

see daily men, of great Sense and experience, and at an age when discretion should guide all their actions, fall into fatal errors, in this case, how much more exposed then, is a person incapable of Reflection, and led on by passion. May it be my lot, at least for ten years to come, never to have my heart exclusively possessed by any individual of the other sex. A man courting appears to me at any time of life, much below his natural dignity; but in a youth it is exceedingly absurd and ridiculous.

December 1785.

3d.

Eliza dined here, and Mr. Mores, a relation of Miss Nancy's. Mr. Thaxter and Miss Duncan, drank tea. In the afternoon I continued reading Watts's logic, but to read such books, with much improvement, I believe a calmer state of mind is requisite, than I now possess. They require the deepest attention, and the most settled Reflection: and of this at present I am not capable. When I reason with myself and ask why I am not happy?, I cannot find an Answer. Such is humanity; when it is not depressed by real Evils, it must necessarily frame to itself imaginary ones: and such is the kindness of Providence, that when it afflicts us with the real, it commonly frees us from the others. Thankful am I, that all my present disagreeable feelings, arise from my own fancy, and those I fear are too small a balance, for the real goods I am blest with. My meaning here, must be obscure, to any one but myself; but I shall never be at a loss with respect to it.

21st.

All day at home. I am often at a great loss, what to say at the End of a day, in this Journal, of mine: I would place my thoughts upon Persons and things: but Persons I do not often see, and when I am in Company with a new Character, and recollect my Observations upon it, they are for the most part either such as I am afraid I should in future consider as partial and ill natured, or wholly insignificant; and my time is so entirely taken up, in other employments, that I make very few reflections upon things. However this scene of perpetual sameness, which does not agree perfectly with my disposition, will not last very long. The family I am in, presents as perfect a scene of happiness, as I ever saw: but it is entirely owing to the disposition of the persons. A life of Tranquility is to them a life of bliss. It could not be so to me. Variety is my Theme, and Life to me is like a journey, in which an unbounded plain, looks dull and insipid; while it affords greater pleasure to be surrounded by a beautiful valley, altho' steep and rugged mountains must be overcome, before it can be got at. I know not whether my Choice is the wisest: and it is possible I may live to change it; but such it is, at present.

January 1786.

6th.

Went down in the Evening and was a couple of hours at Mr. White's. They were to have had Company, there, but were disappointed. I was not. I pass'd the Evening, in a very agreeable, sociable manner, which I should not have done in the other Case. The way we have here of killing Time, in large Companies, appears to me, most absurd and ridiculous. All must be fixed down, in Chairs, looking at one another, like a puppet show, and talking some Common Place phrases to one another, and those that do make observations, adding to their Treasure of scandal which is afterwards dealt out prodigally, in smaller Societies. Why cannot mankind, study their own, and each other's Ease, upon such Occasions, instead of making Society a toil rather than a pleasure.

13th.

Mrs. Payson pass'd the afternoon here. A Daughter of Mrs. Sargeants who was a Coquettish young Widow, and married, about 9 months since; she is in some measure the arbiter of Taste and fashion here: and makes very smart and severe Remarks, upon every one, who does not happen to dress or dance, according to her Taste.

I went down with Nancy to Mr. Duncans, and was there all the Evening; there was considerable Company: the young Squire, as empty, as a Drum, though it must be said in his favour, that he is not very talkative. Mr. Tim Osgood, who return'd yesterday from Newbury, where he went to carry Miss Knight. Mr. Duncan, said, he was an ambitious man, for that he was doing all he could to be Knighted. Miss Stevenson, endeavours to say very witty things, and has an archness of look, as who should say, is not that excellent. There is perhaps a little affectation in the matter, but it is all very excuseable, in a Lady. We must always judge of persons and things from their qualities, relative to others of the same kind. In this Country where fortunes are almost universally very small, four or five hundred £ sterling, annual income is considered as a large fortune; in Europe, it is a very trifling one. Were our young Ladies generally remarkable, for great virtues, and very few and inconsiderable faults, one might with Reason be strict, and severe; but as the matter stands, we must entirely over look small, foibles,

Be to their faults a little blind,

Be to their virtues very kind,¹

for most of our damsels are like portraits in crayons, which at a distance look, well, but if you approach near them, are vile daubings. There are some indeed who like the paintings of the great masters, excite admiration more and more, the nearer, and the longer they are examined. A few such, alone can reconcile me to a sex, which I should otherwise, doubt whether to hate, despise, or pity most.

28th.

Mrs. Shaw went over to Bradford in the afternoon, and pass'd it at Mr. Allen's. Read Locke, upon the Question whether the Soul always thinks: he endeavours to prove that it does not: he has not however satisfied me, so well as upon the Subject of innate Ideas. His principal argument is, the improbability, that we should think several hours together, and not recollect what it was we thought of. But it is beyond dispute that some men do both walk, and talk very rationally in their sleep and yet never recollect one Circumstance of it, and are entirely ignorant of it, unless told by Persons present, at the Time. Now, this being the case, it is no unreasonable argument, to say that if we are sometimes wholly insensible after waking, of what we did while asleep, it may be so always. But I take it this matter must always be somewhat obscure, because it cannot be demonstrated either way. The author seems to think that dreams, are no proof of the soul's being active, but supposed it may be caused by some faculty like that possessed by Beasts. This Idea is ingenious, but is not sufficiently proved true, to be admitted as an argument.

March 1786.

3d.

I have often wish'd to hear the following Question discussed by persons well acquainted with the human heart. Whether any Person can at the same time, Love, and despise, another, of a different sex? I think the two sentiments not only can be, but very often are united: but I may mistake. No Love can be permanent, but what is founded on esteem; but there may be a temporary attachment to a person, who, we are sensible is wholly unworthy of it, and such must be I imagine, all the Conquests of a Coquette who though she may be beloved by many, can be esteemed by none. This Character is so contemptible; that one would think no being blessed with any share of Reason ever could assume it. Vanity it is true, may be flattered for a Time; but it is soon doubly mortified, and when once the flower of Beauty is gone, they have nothing left to recommend them: but so much must suffice for the present.

July 1786.

18th.

Rain'd a great part of the Day. Miss Hiller is only fourteen, her person comes very near to my ideas of a perfect beauty. A pair of large black eyes, with eyelids, an inch long, and eye brows forming beautiful arches, would be invincible if they had a greater degree of animated, and if she was conscious enough of their power, to make use of it. She has not yet I believe been much into Company, and is therefore very silent: to an uncommon degree. I have not heard her speak three times in a day since I have been here. In short she does not appear to have sufficient sensibility

her face is as white as the Snow

And her bosom is doubtless as cold,
but she is not yet arrived to the age, where Sensibility is called forth, and when animation is necessary; the Time will come, when her eyes will be as sparkling, as they are pretty; and her countenance as expressive as it is beautiful.

September 17, 1789.

I attended this morning in the gallery of the house of representatives; to hear the debates. They were upon the judiciary bill. Mr. Gerry, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Burke, Mr. Stone, Mr. Lee, Mr. Maddison, & Mr. Benson all took a part in this debate. But I confess, I did not perceive any extraordinary powers of oratory display'd by any of these gentlemen. The subject had been already so much discussed, that little could be said of further importance. The eloquence had all been exhausted, but the spirit of contention still remained.

November 1, 1818.

Sunday. I was compelled reluctantly to devote this day to the duties of my Office—to prepare the draft of a despatch with Instructions to A. Gallatin and R. Rush, conformably to the decisions of the late Cabinet Meetings— It occupied the day, with the exception of an hour and a half before dinner, in which I took a long solitary walk, and another hour in which I was engaged in reading the Letters that came by the Mail. none from Boston or Quincy! not even that promised by Harriet Welsh! As the scene closes she is too constantly occupied to find a moment for writing, and how can she take the pen to dissolve that last hope, which she had led us still to cherish? My Mother was an Angel upon Earth— She was a Minister of blessing to all human beings within her sphere of action. Her heart was the abode of heavenly purity. She had no feelings but of kindness and beneficence— Yet her mind was as firm as her temper was mild and gentle— She had known sorrow—but her sorrow was silent— She was acquainted with grief; but it was deposited in her own bosom—

She was the real personification of female virtue—of piety—of charity, of ever active, and never intermitting benevolence— Oh! God! could she have been spared yet a little longer!— My lot in life has been almost always cast at a distance from her. I have enjoyed but for short seasons and at long distant intervals the happiness of her Society— Yet she has been to me more than a Mother. She has been a Spirit from above watching over me for good, and contributing by my mere consciousness of her existence, to the comfort of my life— That consciousness is gone; and without her the world feels to me like a solitude— Oh! what must it be to my father, and how will he support life without her who has been to him its charm?— Not my will, heavenly father, but thine be done!

January 1, 1821.

I began the year with invocation to the father of mercies, for virtue and wisdom; and if it be consistent with his Providence, for prosperity— I spent the morning in my chamber at my usual occupation of writing— I am yet examining the Laws of the several States of the Union, upon weights and measures, and this has given me the occasion for a cursory inspection of the Edition now in the process of publication of the Statutes at large of Virginia, from the first Settlement of the Colony— A work which I wish should be executed also in Massachusetts.— I had some conversation with my son George, concerning his future prospects and intentions— He inclines to the study of the Law; which concurs with my own wishes. As he told me his Class were to study the Federalist, at their next term, I have advised him to read it through here, during the vacation— He is undertaking also to be an early riser, and has good dispositions— Mrs Adams with Fanny Johnson and Mary Hellen, and I with Johnson Hellen, and my Sons George and John attended at the drawing room, at the President's— It was more thronged with company, than I ever saw it on any similar occasion. “Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos.” Mr Monroe by a vote, with a single exception unanimous, of all the electoral Colleges of this Union, has just been re-elected President of the United States, for a second term of four years— No such state of things as the present has existed since the establishment of the present Constitution; for although the second election of Washington, like the first, was unanimous; yet the opposition to his administration was more organized and more violent, than it now is to that of Mr. Monroe.

February 22, 1821.

Ratifications of the Florida Treaty—exchanged. General Vivés, came according to appointment, at One O'Clock to the Office of the Department of State, with Mr Salmon his Secretary of Legation. Our preparations were not entirely completed when he came, but were ready within half an hour. I then took the Treaty with the King of Spain's ratification, myself—the General took the Treaty with the President's Ratification, Mr Ironside held one of the Originals executed by me and Mr Onis; and Mr Salmon another— Mr Brent held the printed copy with the President's proclamation. Mr Salmon read from the original in his hand, the Treaty; all the rest comparing their respective copies as he proceeded— I read in like manner the English, from the Treaty which we retain, with the Spanish ratification—both the ratifications were then examined and found correct. The triplicate certificates of the Exchange were then signed and sealed, observing the alternative precedence of signature, as had been done with Mr Onis— General Vivés and Mr Salmon then withdrew, taking with them the Treaty ratified by the President, and leaving that with the Ratification of the King of Spain— I went immediately to the President's— He signed the Proclamation of the ratified Treaty—and the Messages to the two Houses communicating it to them, as proclaimed— The Messages were sent, and that to the House of Representatives, was received while the House were in Session. The Senate had just adjourned when Mr Gouverneur who carried the Message reached the capital.

I sent at the same time to both Houses the Report upon Weights and Measures, prepared, conformably to a Resolution of the Senate of 3. March 1817. and one of the House of

Representatives of the 14th. of December 1819— And thus have terminated, blessed be God, two of the most memorable transactions of my life— This day two years have elapsed since the Florida Treaty was signed. Let my Sons if they ever consult this record of their father's life, turn back to the reflections on the journal of that day—let them meditate upon all the vicissitudes which have befallen the Treaty and of which this Diary bears witness, in the interval between that day and this— Let them remark the workings of private interests, of perfidious fraud, of sordid intrigues, of royal treachery, of malignant rivalry and of envy masked with patriotism, playing to and fro across the atlantic into each others hands, all combined to destroy this Treaty between the signature and the ratification; and let them learn to put their trust in the overruling Providence of God.

I considered the signature of the Treaty as the most important event of my life— It was an event of magnitude in the History of this Union. The apparent conclusion of the Negotiation, had been greatly and unexpectedly advantageous to this Country. It had at once disconcerted and stimulated my personal antagonists and rivals. It promised well for my reputation in the public opinion— Under the petals of this garland of roses the Scapin Onis had hidden a viper. His mock sickness, his use of de Neuville as a tool to perpetrate a fraud, which he did not dare attempt to carry through, himself, his doubts dealing before and after the signature, his fraudulent declarations to me, and his shuffling equivocations here and in Spain to acquire the reputation of having duped the President and me, were but materials in the hands of my enemies, to dose me with poison extracted from the laurels of the Treaty itself— An ambiguity of date, which I had suffered to escape my notice at the signature of the Treaty, amply guarded against by the phraseology of the Article, but leaving room to chicanery for a mere colourable question, was the handle, upon which the king of Spain, his rapacious favourites, and American swindling land jobbers, in conjunction withheld the ratification of the Treaty, while Clay and his admirers here were snickering at the simplicity with which I had been bamboozled by the crafty Spaniard. The partizans of Crawford, and Crawford himself were exulting in the same contemplation of a slur upon my sagacity, and delighting in the supposed failure of the negotiation, because its failure brought unavoidable disgrace upon me— By the goodness of that inscrutable Providence, which entraps dishonest artifice in its own snares, Onis divulged his trick too soon for its success— Clay was the first to snuff the fragrance of this hopeful blasting vapour, and to waft it as his tribute of incense to the President. The demand of a formal declaration by Spain, that the grants in question were by the Treaty null and void, completely and unequivocally obtained at last, has thoroughly disappointed all the calculators of my downfall by the Spanish Negotiation, and left me with credit rather augmented than impaired by the result.

It now remains for the Treaty to receive its Execution, and the aid of the same overruling hand is implored that it may prove as advantageous to this Union, as its warmest friends ever anticipated— The Report on Weights and Measures is a work of different character.— The call of both Houses of Congress for a Report upon a subject which has occupied for the last sixty years many of the ablest men in Europe, and to which all the power, and all the philosophical and mathematical learning and ingenuity of France and of Great-Britain have been incessantly directed, was a fearful and oppressive task— It has now been executed, and it will be for the public judgment to pass upon it— The manuscript has been seen only by the Clerks in the

Department who made copies of it, and by Mr Calhoun the Secretary of War— I communicated it to him with the request that he would peruse it and suggest any alterations which he should think advisable— He recommended the striking out of a few passages, amounting in the whole to about half a page, and two or three variations of expression— His opinion of the work was favourable; though he thinks the objection will be made that it is too much of a Book, for a mere official Report— I altered and erased every passage which he disapproved, though Mr Bailey told me he thought one of them ought to have been spared—

It is, after all the time and pains that I have bestowed upon it a hurried and imperfect work; but I have no reason to expect that I shall ever be able to accomplish any literary labour more important to the best ends of human exertion, public utility, or upon which the remembrance of my children, may dwell with more satisfaction. Yet let me trust, and hope— We had company to dine with us. Messrs. S. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, Elliott, Horsey, Lanman, Taylor, Senators, Cuthbert, Fay, Foot, Hill, Montgomery, Charles Pinckney, Ringgold, Sloane, Tucker of Virginia, and Williams of North-Carolina, Members of the House of Representatives— Messrs Eaton, Morrill, Palmer, and Williams of Mississippi Senators, and Mr Maclay, a member of the House, were invited, but sent excuses, or did not come— In the Evening, with Mrs. Adams and the young Ladies, I attended a Ball at Brown's Hotel in honour of Washington's birthday. The President was a short time there. We stayed till after supper. Home, about midnight.

January 30, 1824.

The day was absorbed by visitors and applications for the vacant Office in the Department of State. Coll. R. M. Johnson, Mr R. King and Mr Fuller had long Conversations with me concerning the Movements of the parties here for the Presidential Succession— Johnson says that Calhoun proposed to him an arrangement by which I should be supported as President, General Jackson as Vice-President; Clay to be Secretary of State and he himself Secretary of the Treasury— Not as a bargain or Coalition; but by the common understanding of our mutual friends. I made no remark upon this; but it discloses the forlorn hope of Calhoun; which is to secure a step of advancement to himself, and the total exclusion of Crawford, even from his present Office at the Head of the Treasury— Johnson said that Governor Barbour, Senator from Virginia, after a Conversation with him, in which he had insisted, and Barbour agreed that upon an Election in the House, should it come there, the vote would be at least two thirds for me against Crawford, said he had thoughts of giving in his adhesion to me; which Johnson advised him by all means to do. Mr King spoke of the state of Affairs in New-York— His own views are in some respects biassed by his situation— He has been heretofore himself a Candidate for the Presidency— He had at one time during the present Administration hopes of being the next in Succession—

There is a spice of disappointment in all his opinions—and his grounds of preference now are too much sectional— There is something peculiar in the state of his mind; for it is transparent in his conduct and discourse that although strenuous for the Northern Man, he would in the event of his failure, not be without consolation— King is one of the wisest, and best men among us. But his

ambition was inflamed by splendid success in early life; followed by vicissitudes of popular favour, and hopes deferred till he has arrived nearly at the close of his public career. He has one Session of Congress to sit in Senate, but talks even now of resigning. Fuller mentioned the meetings which have been held and are holding to ascertain the number of the Members of Congress who deem it inexpedient at this time to make a Caucus nomination for the next Presidency— Coll. Dwight, Mr Rives a member of the House from Virginia, Mr Markley of Pennsylvania called also at my house— And Mr Hanson, for the Clerkship— At the Office Mr George Graham, a Mr Laub for the Clerkship, Mr Connell, who is upon his return to Philadelphia— Mr Pedrick about the Consulate at Batavia, and W. Lee to recommend J. B. Cutting— Evening at home, writing.

May 14, 1824.

Mr R. King called this Morning on me, and said he was apprehensive it would be absolutely necessary for the Senate to annex in some form a limitation to the Slave-trade Convention now before them— He was much averse to it himself, and thought it very absurd— But there was no reasoning with fear— The members from some of the Southern States, had taken a panic, at the late Speeches in the British Parliament, looking to the abolition of Slavery, and were exceedingly adverse to forming any concert with the British Government whatever, in reference to the subject of Slavery— The question was whether the limitation should be for a term of years; or that the Convention may at any time be annulled, on either side, by giving a notice of days or Months— I said of the two evils, the limitation for a term of years would be the least— But either would be highly pernicious— That it would defeat the joint attempt to influence other Nations to make the Slave-trade piracy—

For how absurd that we should try to prevail upon all other Nations, to declare it piracy, when they might retort upon us that we have shrunk from our own obligations, and made it a piracy for a term of years, reserving ourselves the right of repealing our own Law— I said also that any limitation would be peculiarly ungracious from us, the whole project being our own, and adopted at our instance by Great-Britain— Of all which Mr King himself is fully sensible— Visit from Lewis Williams, a member of the House from North-Carolina, with Dr Caldwell, President of the University of that State— Messrs. Dexter, Burgess and Arnold of Providence, Rhode-Island, came to complain against a decision unfavourable to them; of the Florida Treaty claim Commission, upon a claim they had before them— Mr Burgess told me the whole story of the claim, which was long— A case of seizure of a Cargo at Lima, for attempting to trade there without a license; though with a permission from the Vice-Roy of Chili. After hearing out the Story, I told them that there was no appeal from the decision of the Commissioners to the Executive Government, and that we had no controul over them whatever— Mr Mann came for directions respecting the means of conveyance for him to Guatemala and the time of his departure; which I was not prepared to give him— Mr Farrelly, of the house, from Pennsylvania came with a Mr Dallas of Pittsburg, to ask for the Commission of William Wilkins, appointed District judge for the Western-District of Pennsylvania— At the Office I found Albert H. Tracy, member of the house from New-York, who sat and conversed with me an hour or more, upon

political topics generally— His object seemed to be to ascertain how the Presidential canvas stood particularly in Connecticut, the Legislature of which is now in Session— Tracy appeared to be convinced that the Report of the Committee of investigation, would entirely justify Crawford, and in substance if not in words condemn Edwards— He thought they would even do this without waiting for Edwards to be here, although they have sent for him— And he said perhaps it would be the best thing that could happen for Edwards; because after it was effected the manifest injustice of it, would turn the public mind in his favour—

Mr Addington the British Charge d'Affaires came to speak of the Slave trade Convention, and of the duties upon iron— He was much disconcerted at the unexpected opposition to the Convention in the Senate; at which I am not less mortified— As to the iron, I told him the removal of the discrimination was impossible; and that the ground taken for rejecting it would be that we receive rolled iron from other countries as well as from England; as appears from the returns of Commerce for the last year under Sanford's Law— Young Hodgson was again here, and George Sullivan, who told me that the Massachusetts Delegation had had a meeting and unanimously agreed to call up the Bill for the Massachusetts claim; and press for its passage at this time. After dinner I took a solitary walk— Blunt was here to take leave— Going to-morrow for New-York—

February 7, 1825.

...Mr Warfield came upon the notice given him as I had yesterday requested, by Mr Webster— He said that he had not expressed his determination for whom he should vote in the House on Wednesday— His friends Mr Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and Mr Taney of Baltimore had urged him to vote for General Jackson, under an impression that if I should be elected, the administration would be conducted on the principle of proscribing the federal party— I said I regretted much that Mr Carroll, for whose character I entertained a profound veneration, and Mr Taney, of whose talents I had heard high encomium, should harbour such opinions of me. I could assure him, that I never would be at the head of any Administration 75Administration of proscription to any party—political or geographical. I had differed from the federal party on many important occasions, but I had always done justice to the talents and service of the individuals composing it; and to their merits as members of this Union— I had been discarded by the federal party, upon differences of principle, and I had not separated from one party to make myself the slave of another— I referred in proof of my adherence to principle against party, to various acts of my public life, and Mr Warfield declared himself perfectly satisfied with my exposition of my Sentiments. ...

February 9, 1825.

I was elected by the House of Representatives President of the United States. At Drawing-room.

May the blessing of God rest upon the event of this day— The second Wednesday in February; when the Election of a President of the United States for the term of four years from the 4th. of March next was consummated. Of the votes in the electoral Colleges there were 99. for Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, 84 for John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, 41. for William Harris Crawford of Georgia, and 37 for Henry Clay of Kentucky. In all 261. This result having been announced on opening and counting the votes in joint meeting of the two Houses, the House of Representatives immediately proceeded to the vote by ballot from the three highest Candidates, when John Quincy Adams received the votes of 13, Andrew Jackson of 7. and William H. Crawford of 4. States— The election was thus completed, very unexpectedly by a single ballot— Alexander H. Everett gave me the first notice, both of the issue of the votes of the electoral colleges, as announced in the joint meeting, and of the final vote as declared. Wyer followed him a few minutes afterwards— Mr Bolton and Mr Thomas the Naval Architect succeeded; and B. W. Crowninshield, calling on his return from the House to his lodgings at my house, confirmed the reports— Congratulations from several of the Officers of the Department of State ensued— from D. Brent, G. Ironside, W. Slade, and Josias W. King— Those of my wife, children, and family were cordial, and affecting; and I received an affectionate note from Mr Rufus King of New-York, written in the Senate chamber after the event. On my return home James Strong M.H.R. from New-York, came with some solicitude of enquiry concerning the obstacles to the election of Ambrose Spencer, as Senator from that State in the place of Mr King. He asked if my friends considered Spencer as hostile to me.

I said I believed they had considered him as favouring the election of Genl. Jackson. He asked if I did not consider Spencer pledged at least, if elected, not to come with purposes of hostility to the Administration— I said I did not— He said Spencer was an honest man; and if he gave such a pledge would be faithful to it. After dinner the Russian Minister Baron Tuyll called to congratulate me on the issue of the Election— I attended with Mrs Adams the Drawing Room at the President's— It was crowded to overflowing— General Jackson was there, and we shook hands. He was altogether placid and courteous— I received numerous friendly salutations. D. Webster asked me when I could receive the Committee of the House to announce to me my Election. I appointed to-morrow Noon, at my own house— The Committee 77Committee consist of Webster; Vance of Ohio, and Archer of Virginia— I asked S. L. Southard the Secretary of the Navy to call on me to-morrow morning at ten O'Clock— Mr. Daniel Brent had called on me this morning, and said that Mr John Lee M.H.R. from Maryland had told him that he should at the first ballot, be obliged to vote for Jackson; but if the election should not be completed this day he would come and see me to-morrow Morning—

He was disposed to give me his vote, but wished some explanation from me of certain passages of my Oration delivered on the 4th. of July 1821 which had been offensive to the Roman Catholics. I said I would very readily see and converse on this subject with Mr Lee; regretting that anything I had ever said in public should have hurt the religious feelings of any person. Dr. Watkins came likewise and expressed much confidence in the issue that took place. But urging me, if it should be otherwise, and I should attend the Drawing room this Evening, to carry a firm and confident countenance with me, and remarking that a bold outside was often a herald to success— There was fortunately no occasion for this little artifice. I enclosed Mr R. King's Note

with a Letter of three lines to my father, asking for his blessing and prayers on the event of this day; the most important day of my life, and which I would close as it began with supplications to the father of mercies, that its consequences may redound to his glory, and to the welfare of my Country. After I returned from the Drawing Room, a Band of Musicians came and serenaded me at my house— It was past midnight when I retired.

For more of JQA's diaries (sorted by category), visit the [Massachusetts Historical Society](#).

“Lessons from the American Founding” by Cass R. Sunstein
from *Can It Happen Here? Authoritarianism in America*, ed. Cass R. Sunstein

Is the United States of America truly exceptional? Is that why it can't happen here? (In my view, it really can't.)

To answer those questions, let's start at the beginning – not with the firing of shots at Lexington and Concord but with the founding document, and with what remains its best explanation and defense, which was, astonishingly, offered in real time.

To many modern readers, *The Federalist Papers* seem formal, musty, old, and a bit tired – a little like a national holiday, celebrating events long past but lacking a sense of struggle and excitement, or even a clear message. But under remarkable time pressure, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, writing under the name of “Publius,” produced the best historical record, by far, of the ideas that gave birth to American exceptionalism. If authoritarianism can't happen here (and it probably can't), Publius helps explain why.

It is important and true that the explanation was a product of a concrete historical drama, involving the fate of an emerging nation that was having an exceedingly difficult time governing itself. But Publius's claims, and the structure he defended, bear not only on American debates of the eighteenth century but also those of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first. They offer lessons for making war and making peace, and for domestic challenges of many different kinds. Indeed, they provide guidance for constitutional democracies all over the globe, not least when peace, prosperity, and self-government itself are endangered.

In a nutshell, Publius contends that republican governments do best, and are most stable and most protective of liberty, not in a small, homogenous area but in a large, diverse one, complete with a system of checks and balances. According to *The Federalist Papers*, small republics and tightly knit groups often end up destroying liberty, and themselves, simply because of the power of well-organized factions.

But in a large republic, heterogeneity can be a creative force, promoting circumspection and introducing safeguards against bias, error, confusion, and oppression. In Madison's boldest words, the constitutional design, offering checks and balances in a large republic, provides “a Republican remedy for the diseases most incident to Republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being Republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.” Those words are bold, because Republicanism and Federalism were widely thought to be opposed. (We'll see why.)

Publius argues on behalf of a distinctive and novel kind of democracy - a deliberative one. He insists that in a well-functioning deliberative democracy, a wide range of perspectives and diversity of views are a virtue rather than a vice, at least if the constitutional framework has the correct structure. In this way, Publius explicitly repudiates classical republicanism and Montesquieu, the great theorist of republican thought and an important authority for post-revolutionary America.

The repudiation yielded something altogether new and different. That novel conception of republicanism - one that cherishes the spirit of federalists - provides a clue to the longevity of the United States Constitution. It also helps to explain why it has served, for so many, as a model of self-government under law. It helps explain, finally, why it has operated as a robust set of safeguards against (full-scale) authoritarianism in many forms.

Historical Background

To appreciate *The Federalist Papers*, it is indispensable to have some understanding of the Articles of Confederation, which the Constitution replaced. The Articles were adopted shortly after the Revolution in order to ensure a degree of unification of the states for the solution of common foreign and domestic problems, but the overriding understanding was that the states would remain sovereign. The first substantive provision of the Articles announced that “each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.”

A number of powers were, however, conferred on “the United States in Congress assembled.” These powers included “the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war”; the authority to resolve disputes between the states; the power to regulate “the alloy and value of coin struck by their own authority, or by that of the respective states”; and the authority to control dealings with Indian tribes, to establish or regulate post offices, and to appoint naval and other offices in federal service.

By contemporary standards, the Articles of Confederation had conspicuous gaps. Two of the most important powers of the modern national government were missing altogether - the power to tax and the power to regulate commerce. Moreover, two of the three branches of the national government were altogether absent. There was no executive authority. There was no general national judicial authority; the only relevant provision authorized Congress to establish a national appellate tribunal to decide maritime cases. Of course, there was no bill of rights.

By the middle years of the 1780s, many prominent leaders agreed that amendments to the Articles were required. James Madison, along with numerous others, identified a series of concrete problems: encroachments by the states on federal authority, trespasses by some states on others, unjust state laws, and a disastrous absence of mechanisms for coordinated action in domains such as naturalization, commerce, and literary property. Seeking to address those problems, reformers agreed that a prime imperative was to prevent any form of authoritarianism, especially as it had been experienced under British rule, and thus to carry forward the goals for which the Revolution had been fought.

In 1786, state representatives met in Annapolis to discuss the problems that had arisen under the Articles; they adopted a resolution to hold a convention in Philadelphia to remedy those problems. The resulting Constitution developed an altogether novel framework, one that went beyond the Articles of Confederation in a number of ways.

Among the most important changes were the creation of a powerful executive branch; the grant to Congress of the powers to tax and to regulate commerce; and the creation of a federal judiciary, including the Supreme Court and, if Congress chose, lower federal courts. The tenth amendment, added two years later, was a pale echo of the first provision of the Articles of Confederation, deleting the word *expressly*, and it was countered by the clause granting Congress the authority to make “all laws necessary and proper” to effectuate its enumerated powers. To its defenders and to its critics, the most noteworthy feature of the new Constitution was its dramatic expansion of the authority of the national government, giving it a range of fresh powers and authorizing both the executive and the judiciary to exercise considerable authority over the citizenry.

The Constitution was sent to the states for ratification in September 1787. At the time, it proved extremely controversial, and powerful objections were offered against it. There was no assurance that it would be ratified. Opposition was especially intense in New York. Seeking to persuade voters in that state, Alexander Hamilton was the major impetus behind *The Federalist Papers*; he recruited John Jay and James Madison for the effort. Because Jay was injured in a street riot at an early stage, he turned out to be only a modest contributor. The name “Publius” was chosen by Hamilton.

The Antifederalist Case

In many periods in American history, there has been enthusiasm for the arguments of the antifederalists - committed opponents of the proposed Constitution who claimed that the document amounted to a betrayal of the principles underlying the Revolution. We cannot understand Publius’ originality without exploring the relationship between his arguments and those of the antifederalists, whom Publius attempted to rebut.

Many of the antifederalists emphasized the importance, for republican government, of civic virtue. Governmental outcomes were, in their view, to be determined by citizens devoted to a public good separate from the struggle of private interests; and one of government’s key tasks was to ensure the flourishing of the necessary public-spiritedness. In part for this reason, the antifederalists insisted on the importance of decentralization. Only in small communities would it be possible to check a potentially oppressive government, and to find and develop the unselfishness and devotion to the public good on which genuine freedom depends.

In emphasizing the value of small communities, the antifederalists echoed traditional republican theory. Consider the words of Montesquieu, a crucial authority for antifederalists and federalists alike: “In a large republic, the public good is sacrificed to a thousand views; it is subordinate to exceptions, and depends on accidents. In a small one, the interest of the public is easier perceived, better understood, and more within the reach of every citizen; abuses are of less extent, and of course are less protected.” (1)

Emphasizing this point, the antifederalists were deeply hostile to the idea of a dramatic expansion of the powers of the national government. Only a decentralized society would allow the homogeneity and dedication to the public good that would prevent the government from threatening liberty and degenerating into a war among private interests. A powerful national

government would create heterogeneity and distance from the sphere of power - and thereby threaten liberty and undermine the public's willingness to participate in politics as citizens.

The antifederalist Brutus, a close follower of Montesquieu, was most explicit on the point of the importance of homogeneity: "In a republic, the manners, sentiments, and interests of the people should be similar. If this be not the case, there will be a constant clashing of opinions; and the representatives of one part will be continually striving against those of the other. This will retard the operations of government, and prevent such conclusions as will promote the public good." (2)

Many of the antifederalists also sought to avoid extreme disparities in wealth, education, or power. Such disparities would poison the spirit of civic virtue and prevent achievement of the homogeneity of a virtuous people. Thus the antifederalists complained of "the factitious appearances of grandeur and wealth." (3)

From this perspective, the grounds on which the antifederalists based their opposition to the proposed Constitution should be clear. They believed that the Constitution would destroy the system of decentralization on which true liberty depended. Citizens would lose effective control over their representatives. Rule by remote national leaders would attenuate the scheme of representation, rupturing the alliance of interests between the rulers and the ruled. The antifederalists feared that the proposed Constitution would effectively exclude the people from the realm of public affairs and provide weakly accountable national leaders with enormous discretion to make policy and law.

Some of the antifederalists were also skeptical of the emerging interest in commercial development that had played such a prominent role in the decision to abandon the Articles of Confederation in favor of the new Constitution. In the antifederalists' view, commerce was a threat to the principles underlying the Revolution because it gave rise to ambition, avarice, and the dissolution of communal bonds.

Publius' Response

The antifederalist objections to the proposed Constitution provoked Publius to offer a theoretical response that amounted to a new conception of self-government. This conception reformulated long-standing principles of republicanism, in the process rejecting some of its apparently deepest commitments.

The authors of *The Federalist Papers* were fully aware of the originality of the American project. No. 1, written by Hamilton, begins in this way: "It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force."

What is especially noteworthy here is the distinction between "reflection and choice" on the one hand and "accident and force" on the other, with the suggestion that many constitutions

were a product either of random events or of simple power. In suggesting that cherished and time-honored traditions might actually be a product of “accident and force,” Publius is hoping for a fresh path.

But how might the apparently powerful objections of the antifederalists be shown to be unconvincing?

It is best to start with Madison’s No. 10, probably the very greatest of the papers. For Madison, the primary problem for self-government is the control of faction, understood in his famous formulation as “a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. Madison urges that for a well-constructed union, no advantage “deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction.”

Note Madison’s emphasis on both passion and interest - and his suggestion that either one can be harmful to “the rights of other citizens” and to “the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.” We can see Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as animated mostly by passion rather than interest; the same is true of many nations that have stifled liberty. But interest also plays a role, as when nations confiscate property, or when majorities harm minorities whom they see as competitors. The disgraceful internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II was a product of passion, but it was unquestionably based on perceived interest.

In standard republican fashion, the antifederalists rooted the problem of faction in that of corruption; their solution was to control the factional spirit and limit the power of elected representatives. In their view, those close to the people, chosen locally, would not stray from the people’s interests. The civic virtue of the citizenry and of its representatives would work as a safeguard against tyranny. In emphasizing the importance of small republics, the need for civic virtue, the risk of corruption, and the importance of homogeneity, the antifederalists directly followed Montesquieu.

Madison saw things very differently. He transformed the question of corruption into that of faction. He saw the “corruption” that created factions as a natural, though undesirable, product of liberty and inequality in human faculties. This redefinition meant that the basic problems of governance could not be solved by the traditional republican means of education and inculcation of virtue.

Crucially, the problem of faction was likely to be most, not least, severe in a small republic. In a small republic, a self-interested private group could easily seize political power and distribute wealth or opportunities in its favor. Indeed, in the view of the federalists, this was precisely what had happened in the years since the Revolution. During that period, factions had usurped the processes of state government, putting both liberty and property at risk.

Madison viewed the recent history as sufficient evidence that sound governance could not rely on traditional conceptions of civic virtue and public education to guard against factional tyranny. Such devices would be unable to overcome the natural self-interest of men and women,

even in their capacity as political actors. “The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man” Self-interest, in Madison’s view, would inevitably result from differences in natural talents and property ownership. To this point, Madison added the familiar idea that attempting to overcome self-interest would carry a risk of tyranny of its own.

Madison’s Solution

All this justified rejection of the antifederalist belief that the problem of faction could be overcome, but it supplied no positive solution to the problem. In developing a solution Madison was particularly original. He began with the notion that the problem posed by factions is especially acute in a small area, for a “common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole” - and there will be no protection for the minority. Liberty and self-government would be at risk. But a large republic would provide crucial safeguards. There, the diversity of interests would ensure against the possibility that sufficient numbers of people would feel a common desire to oppress minorities.

A large republic thus contained a built-in check against the likelihood of factional tyranny. “The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it.” But “[e]xtend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens.” An extended republic, with diverse interests, creates a built-in protection against oppression.

This was not the only virtue of size. In a large republic, the principle of representation might substantially solve the problem of faction. In a critical passage, Madison wrote that representation would “refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations.” A large republic would simultaneously reduce the danger that representatives would acquire undue attachment to local interests. Emphasizing that risk, Madison favored large rather than small election districts and long rather than short periods of service.

This conception of representation appears throughout *The Federalist Papers*. No. 57 urges that: “The aim of every political constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue the common good of the society; and in the next place, to take the most effectual precautions for keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust.”

In multiple places, Publius suggests that wisdom and virtue would characterize national representatives. Whereas the antifederalists accepted representation as a necessary evil, Publius regarded it as an opportunity for achieving governance by diverse officials devoted to a public good distinct from the struggle of private interests. Representatives would have the time and temperament to engage in a process of reflection. The hope was for a genuinely national politics. The representatives of the people would be free to engage in the process of discussion and debate from which the common good would emerge.

All this was sufficient to suggest that the standard view, rooted in Montesquieu and underlined by Brutus, was altogether wrong: small republics were far less promising than large ones. But what about the risk of “clashing opinions,” which would seem to be greatly increased in a large republic? It is here that Publius offers one of his most important arguments. The central claim is that what Brutus sees as a vice is actually a virtue.

In No. 70, Hamilton writes, “the differences of opinion, and the jarrings of parties in [the legislative] department of the government, though they may sometimes obstruct salutary plans, yet promote deliberation and circumspection, and serve to check excesses in the majority.” Publius views the system of bicameralism as a way of ensuring increased “deliberation and circumspection,” in large part because it enlists diversity both as a safeguard and as a way of enlarging the range of arguments.

We might note here that in the very same number, Hamilton is actually defending the “unitary executive” - the decision to create a single president, who would be in charge of the executive branch and thus in a position to ensure “promptitude of decision” as well as energy. The unitary executive, in key ways subordinate to the legislature, was a crucial part of the system of deliberative democracy. As Hamilton explains in No. 79, an independent judiciary would be to interpret the Constitution, and thus to ensure that the other institutions would be kept within their lawful bounds as established by We the People.

In important respects, the departure from traditional republicanism could not have been greater. On Publius’ account, the Constitution willingly abandoned the classical republican understanding that citizens generally should participate directly in the processes of government. Far from being a threat to freedom, a large republic could help to guarantee it. And in No. 55, Publius rejects explicitly the notion that political actions are inevitably vicious or self-interested: “As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence.”

Structures as Safeguards

Of course, representation in an extended sphere was hardly the entire story. The structural provisions of the Constitution attempted to increase the likelihood of public-spirited representation, to provide safeguards in its absence, and to ensure an important measure of popular control.

Bicameralism thus attempted not only to promote “jarring” but also to ensure that some representatives would be relatively isolated while others would be relatively close to the people. Indirect election of representatives played a far more important role at the time of ratification than it does today; the fact that state legislatures chose senators ensured that one house of the national legislature would have additional insulation from political pressure. The electoral college, puzzling to many modern observers, is another important example of the general effort to promote deliberation among those with different perspectives (see No. 68).

Perhaps most important, the separation-of-powers scheme was designed with the recognition that even national representatives may be prone to the influence of “interests” that are inconsistent with the public welfare. In No. 10, Madison notes that “enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm.” No. 51 elaborates this point and has a distinctive emphasis, relying on the celebrated “policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives.” Whereas conventional republicans emphasized virtue, Madison offered a different prescription: “Ambition,” in the classic formulation, “must be made to counteract ambition.”

The system of checks and balances within the federal structure was intended to operate as a check against both self-interested representation and factional tyranny. If a private group were able to achieve dominance over a certain part of the national government, or if a segment of rulers obtained interests that diverged from those of the people, other national officials would have both the incentive and the means to resist.

The federal system would also act as an important safeguard. The “different governments will control each other” and ensure stalemate rather than action at the behest of particular private interests. The jealousy of state governments and the attachment of the citizenry to local interests would provide additional protection against the aggrandizement of power in national institutions.

The result is a complex system of checks: national representation, bicameralism, indirect election, distribution of powers, and the federal-state relationship would operate in concert to counteract the effects of faction despite the inevitability of the factional spirit. And the Constitution itself, enforced by independent judges and adopted in a moment in which the factional spirit had been perhaps temporarily extinguished, would prevent both majorities and minorities from usurping government power to distribute wealth or opportunities in their favor.

A Deliberative Democracy

The picture that emerges is one of deliberative democracy. Publius rejects the view of his antifederalist adversaries on the ground that they missed the lessons of both theory and experience. They undervalued the likelihood that local government would be dominated by private interests instead of profiting from civic virtue. Publius doubts that the private interests of the citizenry could be subordinated by instilling principles of civic virtue. Publius doubts that the private interests of the citizenry could be subordinated by instilling principles of civic virtue. Finally, Publius thinks that commercial development is crucial to the new nation and could not be achieved without a considerable degree of centralization.

The notion that politics might be conducted solely as a process of bargaining and trade-offs was far from Publius’ understanding. His suspicion of civic virtue, at least as a complete solution, and his relatively skeptical attitude toward the possibility that citizens could escape their self interest led Publius to reject the traditional republican structure without rejecting important features of its understanding of politics. Hence Madison’s stunning suggestion that the “pleasure and pride we feel in being Republicans” does not lead to the doubts and fears of the antifederalists; on the contrary, that very pleasure and pride lead directly to the hope and optimism of the Federalists.

Crucially, the system of checks and balances, in a large republic, would help to improve deliberation. In this system, judicial review was hardly a means of frustrating the public will; on the contrary, it would help to ensure that We the People would remain superior to our rulers. Perhaps the most significant element in federalist thought was the expectation that the constitutional system would serve republican goals better than the traditional republican solution of small republics, civic education, and close ties between representatives and their publics. The federalists insisted that the new system of deliberative democracy would preserve the underlying republican model of politics without running the risk of tyranny or relying on naive understandings about the human capacity to escape self-interest.

Was Publius Right?

Reasonable people have wondered whether Publius was right. The United States has been a beacon for people all over the globe, the clearest symbol of a system, and a culture, that stands opposed to authoritarianism in all its forms. But the national record is hardly spotless. For many decades, slavery was an accepted feature of the American system. In times of war, civil liberties and civil rights have been badly compromised. Protection of freedom of speech is a product of the second half of the twentieth century; before that time, speech could be punished if it was regarded as dangerous. The system of checks and balances did not prevent racial segregation, mandated by law.

This is not the place for a catalogue of abuses by the US government or by the various states. But the very fact that it would be easy to produce one raises a cautionary note about any effort to argue that Publius was entirely right. Indeed, that same fact shows that the very question “Can it happen here?” contains some serious ambiguities. Above all, what is “it”? The question is typically understood to refer to a victory for authoritarianism - something close to Hitler’s German or Stalin’s Soviet Union. But nations that fall far short of full-scale authoritarianism can and certainly do engage in practices that violate the principles of free and self-governing societies, and that would make authoritarian nations proud.

Antifederalist themes can be found in long-standing American skepticism about a centralized and occasionally remote national government - and in corresponding enthusiasm for the authority of state and local officials. Over the last decades, those themes have come mostly from the political right, complaining of what many people have seen as excessively aggressive acts by Democratic leaders such as Lyndon Johnson, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama. We may doubt whether those acts suggest anything like a failure of Publius’ project, but it is noteworthy that the antifederalist objections have played a continuing role in American political debate.

At important times in American history, an independent judiciary has been seen not as a bulwark of liberty but as a threat to self-government, very much in line with the fears of the antifederalists. In the early part of the twentieth century, federal courts struck down progressive legislation, such as maximum hour and minimum wage laws. Decades later, they struck down legislation more likely to be favored by the right, such as prohibitions on abortion, sex discrimination, and departures from the idea of one person, one vote. No one can plausibly argue that an occasionally aggressive federal judiciary has meant that authoritarianism came to the United States. But Publius certainly did not anticipate it.

In a large republic, interest groups, or factions, have wielded considerable power, requiring serious qualifications of Madison's arguments in No. 10. Here, too, it would be difficult to argue that his arguments are fundamentally wrong, but the United States is, in important respects, far smaller than it once was, because it is so easy to communicate and organize across geographical barriers that were once formidable. In some areas, factions can and do take over the government's apparatus, at least for a time.

The Unexpectedly Powerful Presidency

But it is the rise of an immensely powerful presidency, and the growth of the national security and administrative apparatus, that have raised the most serious questions about many of Publius' claims. At the time of the founding, and notwithstanding the fear of monarchies, the legislature was widely seen as the most dangerous branch. Today, it is often paralyzed, and when it is not, it tends to follow the president's lead.

Although Publius was greatly concerned to constrain the authority of the executive, he did not anticipate a situation of this kind. As he put it:

In a government where numerous and extensive prerogatives are placed in the hands of an hereditary monarch, the executive department is very justly regarded as the source of danger, and watched with all the jealousy which a zeal for liberty ought to inspire. In a democracy, where a multitude of people exercise in person the legislative functions, and are continually exposed, by their incapacity for regular deliberation and concerted measures, to the ambitious intrigues of their executive magistrates, tyranny may well be apprehended, on some favorable emergency, to start up in the same quarter. But in a representative republic, where the executive magistracy is carefully limited; both in the extent and the duration of its power; and where the legislative power is exercised by an assembly, which is inspired, by a supposed influence over the people, with an intrepid confidence in its own strength; which is sufficiently numerous to feel all the passions which actuate a multitude, yet not so numerous as to be incapable of pursuing the objects of its passions, by means which reason prescribes; it is against the enterprising ambition of this department that the people ought to indulge all their jealous and exhaust all their precautions.

It is a subtle argument, but its modern force is doubtful. One reason is that in the twenty-first-century "representative republic" that is the United States, the power of the executive magistracy is not so carefully limited in the extent and the duration of its power. After the New Deal in particular, massive, awe-inspiring, occasionally fear-producing policymaking power has been wielded by presidents and those who work for them. It is a nice question whether Publius' particular claims about republican government remain convincing in light of the rise of an immensely powerful presidency. What, we might ask, can constrain it, if it is really determined to move in authoritarian directions?

Even centuries later, some of the central answers do come from Publius.

First: The system of checks and balances ensures, now as ever, that the president almost always needs legislative authorization in order to act. At least in the domestic domain, he cannot act unilaterally; Congress must give him the power to do what he wants. In theory, of course, a president could simply ignore the restriction of his authority. But no president is likely to do that. Publius might have been more focused on the dangers associated with Congress, but the design of the national government did serve to limit the president's room to maneuver, even under radically changed conditions.

Second: The federal judiciary is generally available to insist that the executive must obey the law. Most of the time, it acts as a deterrent to unlawful action and also as a corrective to such action when it occurs. When President Harry Truman seized the nation's steel mills in the midst of the Korean War, the Supreme Court struck down his action. When President Richard Nixon tried to prevent the publication of the Pentagon Papers, the Supreme Court stopped him. When President Donald Trump imposed what was widely seen as a "Muslim ban," the federal courts stood in his way, at least at the start. To be sure, the president appoints the nation's judges, and we can imagine a federal judiciary that is supine in the face of presidential aggression. But imagination is one thing; reality is another.

Third: The Bill of Rights has assumed far more importance than the founding generation expected. It is now a defining feature of American law and (equally important) culture. Arguably authoritarian measures are likely to run into serious objections under one or another provision of the Bill of Rights - the due process clause, the free exercise provision, the free speech provision, the right to a jury trial.

Fourth: In the American republic, the court of public opinion often reigns supreme, and that particular court imposes severe constraints on what national officials do. Publius was well aware of this point. And because respect for rights and for the central ingredients of self-government are culturally engrained, public opinion is a serious check on the executive - on both what it wants to do and what it can do, whatever it wants.

There is a cautionary note. Institutional safeguards can alter probabilities, but they do not offer guarantees. The system of checks and balances is far less robust than Publius expected, because legislatures generally support presidents of their political party - which means that ambition is less likely to counteract ambition. Some of the time, ambition reinforces ambition, as legislators bow to the will of the chief executive. We have also seen that when national security is threatened, legislatures tend to give the president the authority that he wants. If the American project is to be seriously jeopardized, it will almost certainly be because of a very serious security threat.

But let's not engage in speculative thought experiments. The sheer longevity of the constitutional framework that Publius defended, and the place it has maintained for both democracy and deliberation, continue to attest to the power of Publius' arguments. Taken as a whole, the American experience suggests that Publius did not go far wrong. Mostly, he has been proved right.

Notes:

1 - Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

2 - Herbert Storing, ed., *The Complete Anti-Federalist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

3 - See vol. 6 of *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, 201.

“It Can’t Happen Here”: The Lessons of History by Geoffrey R. Stone
from *Can It Happen Here? Authoritarianism in America*, ed. Cass R. Sunstein

Any effort to impose authoritarian rule inevitably involves the suppression of criticism of those in positions of authority.¹ Put simply, authoritarianism and civil liberties do not go hand in hand. Americans tend to assume that because of our long-standing commitment to civil liberties we are reasonably safe from the dangers of authoritarian rule. Such an assumption is dangerously wrong. In fact, throughout our history, in times of real or perceived crisis, we have repeatedly collapsed in our commitment to individual freedom, often aggressively stifling dissent and endangering the central precepts of our democracy.

In order to cast aside our naïve assumption that “it can’t happen here” and to understand our vulnerability both to the suppression of freedom of speech and the danger of authoritarianism, it is necessary to recall several critical moments in our nation’s history. To explore this history, I will briefly review our experience in 1798, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. I will then offer some concluding observations.

In 1798, many of the ideas generated by the French Revolution aroused fear and hostility in segments of the American population. A bitter political and philosophical debate raged between the Federalists, then in power, and the Republicans. The Federalists feared that the sympathy of the Republicans for the French Revolution indicated a willingness to plunge the United States into a similar period of violence and upheaval. The Republicans feared that the Federalist sympathy for England denoted a desire to restore aristocratic forms and class distinctions in America.

As the international situation deteriorated, President Adams sent John Marshall to Paris to negotiate a treaty that would guarantee the immunity of American shipping from attacks by French corsairs. When this effort failed because the French demanded “tribute” to help finance their war with England, the Adams administration initiated a series of defense measures that carried the United States into a state of undeclared war with France.

The Republicans fiercely criticized these measures, leading President Adams to declare that the Republicans “would sink the glory of our country and prostrate her liberties at the feet of France.”² The Federalists attempted to discredit the Republicans by attacking their loyalty, their ideology, and their morality.

Against this backdrop, the Federalists enacted the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.³ The Alien Act empowered the president to deport any noncitizen he judged dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States. The Act accorded the noncitizen no right to a hearing, or even to present evidence on his behalf. Although the Alien Act was never enforced, it had a powerfully intimidating effect.

The Sedition Act prohibited the publication of “false, scandalous, and malicious writings against the government of the United States, the Congress, or the President, with intent to bring

¹ Much of this essay is drawn from Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act*

² Letter from John Adams to the Inhabitants of Arlington and Bandgate, Vermont, June 25, 1798, in Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams*, vol. 9 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1854), 202.

³ An Act Concerning Aliens, 5th Cong., 2d Sess., in *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1845), 570-72; An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes against the United States, 5th Cong., 2d Sess., in *Ibid.*, 596-97.

them into contempt or disrepute.” Unlike the Alien Act, the Sedition Act was vigorously enforced, but only against supporters of the Republican Party. Prosecutions were brought against the leading Republican newspapers and the most vocal critics of the Adams administration. The Act proved an effective weapon for the suppression of dissent.

Consider, for example, the plight of Matthew Lyon, a Republican congressman from Vermont. During his reelection campaign, Lyon published an article in which he asserted that under President Adams “every consideration of the public welfare was swallowed up in a continual grasp for power and an unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation, and selfish avarice.”⁴ Because this statement clearly brought the president into “disrepute,” Lyon was convicted and sent to prison. The Federalist press rejoiced, but Lyon became an instant martyr and was reelected to Congress while in jail.

The Supreme Court did not have occasion to rule on the constitutionality of the Sedition Act at the time, and the Act expired by its own terms on the last day of Adams’s term of office. President Jefferson thereafter pardoned all those who had been convicted under the Act, and Congress repaid the fines. The Supreme Court has never missed an opportunity in the years since to remind us that the Sedition Act of 1798 has been judged unconstitutional in the “court of history.”⁵

During the Civil War, the nation faced perhaps its most severe challenge. As in most civil wars, there were sharply divided loyalties, fluid military and political boundaries, and easy opportunities for espionage and sabotage. Moreover, the nation had to cope with the stresses of slavery, emancipation, conscription, and staggering casualty lists, all of which triggered deep division and even violent protest.

Faced with these tensions, President Lincoln had to balance the conflicting interests of military security and individual liberty. At the core of this conflict was the writ of habeas corpus, which has historically guaranteed a detained individual the right to a prompt judicial determination of whether his detention by government is lawful.

The issue first arose shortly after Fort Sumter, in April 1861, when anti-Union rioting in Baltimore effectively isolated the nation’s capital from the rest of the Union. To restore order and assure the movement of Union troops through Maryland, Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus and imposed martial law. There was no clear precedent for this action, and Lincoln’s private secretaries later disclosed that his anxiety over this decision threw him into a state of severe “nervous tension.”⁶

Given the perilous state of the Union in April 1861, it is perhaps not surprising that there was no significant public or congressional opposition to Lincoln’s suspension of the writ in Maryland. During the course of the war, Lincoln went on to suspend the writ of habeas corpus on eight separate occasions. The most extreme of these suspensions, which was applicable throughout the entire nation, declared that “all persons... guilty of any disloyal practice... shall be subject to court martial.”⁷ Estimates of the number of civilians imprisoned by military

⁴ Francis Wharton, *State Trials of the United States During the Administrations of Washington and Adams* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849), 333.

⁵ *New York Times v. Sullivan*, 376 US 254, 276 (1964).

⁶ Mark E. Neely, *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5-7.

⁷ Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 5 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1956), 436-37.

authorities under these orders range from 13,000 to 38,000. Most of the arrests were premised on charges of draft evasion, desertion, sabotage, and aiding the enemy.

In some instances, civilians were taken into military custody for criticizing the war. The most prominent example of this was former Ohio congressman Clement Vallandigham, who was arrested by military authorities and later exiled by Lincoln because of a speech he delivered in 1863 in which he described the war as “wicked, cruel and unnecessary” and as a “war for the freedom of blacks and the enslavement of whites.”⁸ During the course of the war, as many as three hundred opposition newspapers were suspended because of their alleged “disloyalty” to the Union cause.

In 1866, a year after the war ended, the Supreme Court held in *Ex parte Milligan*⁹ that Lincoln had exceeded his constitutional authority as commander in chief. The Court ruled that the president was not constitutionally empowered to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, even in time of war, if the ordinary civil courts were open and functioning.

The story of civil liberties during World War I is, in many ways, an even more disturbing chapter in our nation’s history. When the United States entered the war in April 1917, there was strong opposition to both the war and the draft. Many citizens believed that our goal was not to “make the world safe for democracy,” but to protect the investments of the wealthy. War opponents were sharply critical of the Wilson administration.

President Wilson had little patience for such dissent. After the sinking of the *Lusitania*, he warned that disloyalty “must be crushed out” of existence,¹⁰ and in calling for federal legislation against disloyal expression he insisted that disloyalty “was... not a subject on which there was room for... debate.”¹¹

Shortly after the United States entered the war, Congress enacted the Espionage Act of 1917. Although the Act dealt primarily with espionage and sabotage, several provisions had serious consequences for the freedom of speech. Specifically, the Act made it a crime for any person willfully to “cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, or refusal of duty in the military forces of the United States” or to willfully “obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States.”¹²

Although the congressional debate makes clear that the 1917 Act was not intended to suppress dissent generally, but to address very specific concerns relating directly to the operation of the military, aggressive federal prosecutors and compliant federal judges soon transformed the Act into a full-scale prohibition of seditious utterance. The administration’s intent in this regard was made evident in November 1917 when Attorney General Charles Gregory, referring to war dissenters, declared: “May God have mercy on them, for they need expect none from an outraged people and an avenging government.”¹³

⁸ See Michael Kent Curtis, *Free Speech, “The People’s Darling Privilege”: Struggles for Freedom of Expression in American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 310.

⁹ 4 Wall. (71 US) 2 (1866).

¹⁰ Woodrow Wilson, “Third Annual Message to Congress,” quoted in David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 24.

¹¹ Quoted in Paul L. Murphy, *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 53.

¹² Act of June 15, 1917, ch. 30, tit. I, § 3, 40 Stat. 219.

¹³ *New York Times*, November 21, 1917, 3.

In fact, the federal government worked strenuously to create an “outraged people.” Because there had been no direct attack on the United States and no direct threat to our national security, the administration found it necessary to generate a sense of urgency and a mood of anger in order to exhort Americans to enlist, to contribute money, and to make the many sacrifices that war demands.

To this end, President Wilson established the Committee on Public Information, under the direction of George Creel, whose charge was to promote support for the war. The CPI produced a flood of inflammatory and often misleading pamphlets, news releases, speeches, editorials, and motion pictures, all designed to instill a hatred of all things German and of all persons whose loyalty was open to doubt.

In the first month of the war, Attorney General Gregory asked “every loyal American to act as a ‘voluntary detective,’ suggesting that ‘citizens should bring their suspicions to the Department of Justice.’”¹⁴ As a result, literally thousands of accusations of disloyalty poured into the Department each day.

The general tenor of the legal profession in this era was to be severely patriotic, and lawyers who criticized the war – or even defended war critics – were subjected to ostracism and occasionally even formal discipline. In this environment, it was unlikely that many judges would stand up to the pressures for suppression. The Department of Justice prosecuted more than two thousand individuals for allegedly disloyal or seditious expression in this era, and in an atmosphere of fear, hysteria, and clamor, most judges were quick to mete out severe punishment to those deemed disloyal. As Harvard professor Zechariah Chafee observed at the time, under the prevailing interpretation of the Espionage Act, “all genuine discussion of the justice and wisdom of continuing the war becomes perilous.”¹⁵

But even this was not enough. Angered by the rulings of a few courageous judges who interpreted the Espionage Act narrowly, Congress enacted the Sedition Act of 1918,¹⁶ which expressly prohibited any person to utter any disloyal, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government, the Constitution, the flag, or the military forces of the United States.

Even the signing of the Armistice did not bring this era to a close. The Russian Revolution had generated deep anxiety in the United States, and a series of violent strikes and spectacular bombings triggered the period of intense public paranoia that became known as the “Red Scare” of 1919-1920. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer announced that the bombings were an “attempt on the part of radical elements to rule the country,” and the *New York Times* proclaimed: “Red Peril Here!”¹⁷

Palmer established the General Intelligence Division within the Bureau of Investigation and appointed J. Edgar Hoover to gather and coordinate information about radical activities. The GID unleashed a horde of undercover agents and confidential informants to infiltrate radical organizations.

From November 1919 to January 1920, the GID conducted a series of stunning raids in thirty-three cities. More than five thousand people were arrested on suspicion of radicalism. The general procedure was to make wholesale arrests of people in places believed to be radical hangouts. The *Washington Post* proclaimed that “there is no time to waste on hairsplitting over

¹⁴ Quoted in Murphy, *World War I*, 94-95.

¹⁵ Zechariah Chafee, *Freedom of Speech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 52.

¹⁶ Act of May 16, 1918, ch. 75, § 1, 40 Stat. 553.

¹⁷ Quoted in Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), 9; *New York Times*, March 11, 1919.

any supposed infringements of liberty.”¹⁸ More than a thousand individuals were summarily deported.

And where was the Supreme Court in all this? In a series of decisions in 1919 and 1920 – *Schenck*, *Frohwerk*, *Debs*, *Abrams*, *Schaefer*, *Pierce*, and *Gilbert* – the Supreme Court consistently upheld the convictions of individuals who had agitated against the war and the draft – individuals as obscure as Jacob Abrams and Mollie Steimer, Russian-Jewish émigrés who had distributed antiwar leaflets in Yiddish on the lower East Side of New York, and as prominent as Eugene V. Debs, who had received almost a million votes as the Socialist Party candidate for president in 1916.¹⁹

Although Justices Holmes and Brandeis eventually separated themselves from their brethren and launched what became a critical underground tradition within the Court’s First Amendment jurisprudence, the Court as a whole showed no interest in the rights of dissenters. As the University of Chicago First Amendment scholar Harry Kalven once observed, the Court’s performance in these cases was “simply wretched.”²⁰

In December 1920, after all the dust had settled, Congress quietly repealed the Sedition Act of 1918. In 1924, Attorney General and future Supreme Court Justice Harlan Fiske Stone ordered an end to the Bureau of Investigation’s surveillance of political radicals. “A secret police,” he explained is “a menace to free government and free institutions.”²¹ Between 1919 and 1923, the federal government released from prison every individual who had been convicted under the Espionage and Sedition Acts. A decade later, President Roosevelt granted amnesty to all these individuals, restoring their full political and civil rights.

Over the next half century, the Supreme Court of the United States overruled every one of its World War I decisions, holding in effect that every one of the individuals who had been imprisoned or deported in this era for his or her dissent had been punished for speech that should have been protected by the First Amendment.²²

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The next day, the United States declared war against Japan, Germany, and Italy. Two months later, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the US Army to “designate military areas” from which “any persons may be excluded.”²³ Although the words *Japanese* or *Japanese-American* never appeared in the Order, it was understood to apply only to persons of Japanese ancestry.

Over the next eight months, more than 110,000 individuals of Japanese descent were forced to leave their homes in California, Washington, Oregon, and Arizona. Two-thirds of these individuals were American citizens, representing almost 90 percent of all Japanese-Americans. No charges were brought against these individuals; there were no hearings; they did not know where they were going, how long they would be detained, what conditions they would face, or what fate

¹⁸ *Washington Post*, January 4, 1920, 4.

¹⁹ *Schenck v. United States*, 249 US 47 (1919); *Frohwerk v. United States*, 249 U.S. 204 (1919); *Debs v. United States*, 249 US 211 (1919); *Abrams v. United States*, 250 US 616 (1919); *Schaefer v. United States*, 251 US 466 (1920); *Pierce v. United States*, 252 US 239 (1920); *Gilbert v. Minnesota*, 254 US 325 (1920).

²⁰ Harry Kalven Jr., *A Worthy Tradition: Freedom of Speech in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 147.

²¹ Quoted in Max Lowenthal, *The Federal Bureau of Investigation* (New York: Sloane, 1950), 298.

²² See *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 US 444 (1969).

²³ Executive Order No. 9066, 7 Fed. Reg. 1407 (1942).

would await them. They were told to bring only what they could carry. Many families lost everything.

On the orders of military police, these individuals were assigned to temporary “detention camps,” which had been set up in converted racetracks and fairgrounds. Many families lived in crowded horse stalls, often in unsanitary conditions. Barbed-wire fences and armed guard towers surrounded the compounds. From there, the internees were transported to permanent internment camps, which were located in isolated areas in windswept deserts or vast swamplands. There they remained for some three years.

Why did this happen? Certainly, the days following Pearl Harbor were dark days for the American spirit. Fear of possible Japanese sabotage and espionage was rampant, and an outraged public felt an understandable instinct to lash out at those who had attacked us. But this act was also very much an extension of more than a century of poisonous racial prejudice against the “yellow peril.” Racist statements and sentiments permeated the debate from December 1941 to February 1942 about how to deal with these individuals.

Agitation for a mass evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry – rather than a more targeted program focused only on enemy aliens found to be dangerous – was inflamed by a series of false reports of Japanese espionage, sabotage, and infiltration. California’s attorney general, Earl Warren, argued that, unlike the situation with respect to Germans and Italians, it was simply too difficult to determine which Americans of Japanese ancestry were loyal and which were not.

On the other side of the debate, the Department of Justice argued that a mass evacuation of Japanese-Americans was both unnecessary and unconstitutional. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover reported to Attorney General Biddle that the demand for mass evacuation was based on “public hysteria,” and he assured Biddle that the FBI had already identified suspected Japanese agents and taken them into custody.

Nonetheless, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. The decision to intern all men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry was made by the president, as commander in chief. The issue was never discussed in the Cabinet, and it was opposed by both the attorney general and the secretary of war. Although FDR explained the Order in terms of military necessity, there is little doubt that domestic politics played at least a role in his thinking.

In *Korematsu v. United States*,²⁴ decided in 1944, the Supreme Court, in a six-to-three decision, upheld the president’s action. The Court justified its action by observing that “hardships are part of war, and war is an aggregation of hardships.” In such circumstances, and deferring to the judgment of the Executive, the Court insisted that it could not “say that these actions were unjustified.”²⁵

In 1980, a congressional commission concluded that the implementation of Executive Order 9066 had violated the rights of Japanese Americans. Eight years later, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered an official presidential apology and reparations to each of the Japanese-American internees who had suffered discrimination, loss of liberty, loss of property, and personal humiliation because of the actions of the United States government. The Court’s decision in *Korematsu* has come to be seen as a black mark on the Court’s jurisprudence.

²⁴ 323 US 214 (1944). See also *Hirabayashi v. United States*, 320 US 81 (1943) (upholding the constitutionality of the curfew order); *Yasui v. United States*, 320 US 114 (1943) (same).

²⁵ *Id.*, 219-20, 223-34.

As World War II drew to a close, the nation moved almost seamlessly into what came to be known as the Cold War. When Harry Truman became president in 1945, the federal and state statute books were already bristling with anti-communist legislation. As the glow of our wartime alliance with the Soviet Union evaporated, Truman came under increasing attack from a coalition of Southern Democrats and anti-New Deal Republicans who sought to exploit fears of Communist aggression.

Thereafter, the issue of loyalty became a shuttlecock of party politics. By 1948, Truman was boasting on the stump that he had imposed on the federal civil service the most extreme loyalty program in the “Free World.” Leaving no doubt of the matter, he proclaimed: “I want you to get this straight. I hate Communism.”²⁶

There were limits, however, to Truman’s anticommunism. In 1950, Truman vetoed the McCarran Act, which required the registration of all Communists. Truman explained that the Act was the product of “public hysteria” and would lead inevitably to “witch hunts.”²⁷ Congress passed the Act over Truman’s veto.

Then, in 1954, Congress enacted the Communist Control Act, which stripped the Communist Party of “all rights, privileges, and immunities.”²⁸ Only one senator, Estes Kefauver, dared to vote against it. Hysteria over the Red Menace now swept the nation and produced a wide range of federal and state restrictions on free expression and free association. These included not only the McCarran and Communist Control Acts but also extensive loyalty programs for federal, state, and local employees; emergency detention plans for alleged “subversives”; extensive and often abusive legislative investigations; and direct prosecution of the leaders and members of the Communist Party of the United States.

The key Supreme Court decision in this era was *Dennis v. United States*,²⁹ in 1951, which involved the direct prosecution under the Smith Act of the leaders of the American Communist Party. The indictment charged the defendants with advocating the violent overthrow of the government. In a six-to-two decision, the Court held that this conviction did not violate the First Amendment. In a highly prescient dissenting opinion, Justice Hugo Black observed that “public opinion being what it now is, few will protest the conviction of these” Communists. “There is hope, however, that in calmer times, when present pressures, passions and fears subside, this... Court will restore the First Amendment liberties to the... place where they belong in a free society.”³⁰

Over the next several years, in a series of decisions premised on *Dennis*, the Court upheld the Subversive Activities Control Act, far-reaching legislative investigations of “subversive” organizations and individuals, and the exclusion of members of the Communist Party from the bar, the ballot, and public employment.³¹ In so doing, the Court clearly put its stamp of approval on an array of actions we today look back on as models of McCarthyism.

²⁶ Quoted in David Cate, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), 33.

²⁷ *New York Times*, September 21, 1950.

²⁸ 68 Stat. 775, 50 USC § 841.

²⁹ 341 US 494 (1951).

³⁰ *Id.*, 581 (Black, J., dissenting).

³¹ See, e.g., *Communist Party v. Subversive Activities Control Board*, 367 US 1 (1961) (upholding the Subversive Activities Control Act’s requirement that Communist and Communist-front organizations register with the government); *Adler v. Board of Education*, 342 US 485 (1952) (upholding a New York law providing that no person who knowingly becomes a member of any organization that advocates the violent overthrow of government may be appointed to any position in a public school); *Barenblatt v. United States*, 360 US 109 (1949) (upholding the

In the Vietnam War, as in the Civil War and World War I, there was substantial opposition both to the war and to the draft. After President Nixon announced the American “incursion” into Cambodia, student strikes closed a hundred campuses. Governor Ronald Reagan, asked about campus militants, replied, “If it takes a bloodbath, let’s get it over with.”³²

On May 4, 1970, National Guardsmen at Kent State University responded to taunts and rocks by firing their M-1 rifles into a crowd of students, killing four and wounding nine others. Protests and strikes exploded at more than 1,200 of the nation’s colleges and universities. Thirty ROTC buildings were burned or bombed in the first week of May. The National Guard was mobilized in sixteen states. As Henry Kissinger put it later, “The very fabric of government was falling apart.”³³

Despite all this, there was no systematic effort during the Vietnam War to prosecute individuals for their opposition to the war. There are many reasons for this, including, of course, the compelling fact that most of the dissenters in this were the sons and daughters of the middle class, and thus could not so easily be targeted as the “other.” But the courts, and especially the Supreme Court, played a key role in this period. In 1969, the Court in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*,³⁴ overruled *Dennis* and held that even advocacy of unlawful conduct cannot be punished unless it is likely to incite “imminent lawless action.” The Court had come a long way in the fifty years since World War I.³⁵

But the government found other ways to impede dissent. The most significant of these was the FBI’s extensive effort in this era to infiltrate and to “expose, disrupt and otherwise neutralize” allegedly “subversive” organizations, ranging from civil rights groups to the various factions of the antiwar movement. In this COINTELPRO operation, the FBI compiled political dossiers on more than a half million Americans.

What can we learn from this history? I would like to offer three concluding observations.

First, we have a long and unfortunate history of overreacting to perceived dangers to our nation. Time after time, we have allowed our fears to get the better of us. Although each of these episodes presented markedly different challenges, in each we went too far in restricting individual liberties. Moreover, in each of these situations our national leaders abused their authority and misled the American people about their rights and responsibilities.

Second, one of the central safeguards of our democracy is a free, robust, and courageous marketplace of ideas. A critical function of free expression is to help us make wise decisions about whether our leaders are leading well. The freedom of speech is not merely a right of the individual but a fundamental national interest that is essential to the very existence of democratic decision-making.

My third and final observation brings me to the present. Today, in the era of Trump—a president who understands nothing of our history or of the necessary preconditions of our democracy—we face a truly serious threat to the rule of law, to our democracy, and to our

power of the House Committee on Un-American Activities to require an instructor at Vassar College to answer questions about his past and present membership in the Communist Party).

³² *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 8, 1970, 1.

³³ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (New York: Little, Brown, 1979), 513.

³⁴ 385 US 444 (1969).

³⁵ See Frank Strong, *Fifty Years of “Clear and Present Danger”: From Schenck to Brandenburg—And Beyond*, 1969 Sup. Ct. Rev. 41.

constitutional freedoms. It is, of course, much easier to look back on past crises and find out predecessors wanting than it is to make wise judgments when we ourselves are in the eye of the storm. But that challenge now falls to us. As Justice Brandeis once observed, “those who won our independence” knew that “courage is the secret of liberty.”³⁶ That, I think, is the most fundamental insight for us to bear in mind.

To strike the right balance in our time, we need political leaders who know right from wrong; federal judges who will stand fast against the furies of the age; members of the bar and the academy who will help us see ourselves clearly; members of the media who will fulfill their fundamental responsibility to keep our leaders honest; an informed public who will value not only their own liberties but also the liberties of others; and, perhaps most of all, elected officials with the wisdom to know excess when they see it and the courage to preserve liberty when it is imperiled. We shall see. It would be a grave mistake to think that “it can’t happen here.”

³⁶ *Whitney v. California*, 274 US 357, 375 (1927) (Brandeis, J., concurring).

Timeline of U.S. History 1732 - 1863

1732

February 22: George Washington is born in Westmoreland County, Virginia to Augustine Washington and his second wife, Mary Ball.

The First Great Awakening sweeps through Britain and the thirteen colonies, marking the emergence of evangelicalism in the Christian church.

1733

February 12: The English settlement of Savannah and the Province of Georgia are founded by James Oglethorpe. In the Oglethorpe Plan, he envisioned a system of "agrarian equality", designed to support and perpetuate an economy based on family farming, and prevent social disintegration associated with unregulated urbanisation. Land ownership was limited to fifty acres, a grant that included a town lot, a garden plot near town, and a forty-five-acre farm. No one was permitted to acquire additional land through purchase or inheritance. Georgia was originally conceived to be anti-slavery, instead focusing on small family-owned farms, but eventually economic pressures led to lifting the ban on slavery.

1734

1735

October 19: John Adams is born in the city of Braintree, Massachusetts. His parents were John Adams and Susana Boylston. He was the oldest of two brothers, Peter and Elihu.

1736

1737

1738

1739

1740

1741

1742

1743

April 12: Augustine Washington, George's father, dies. George Washington is only 11 years old. Washington inherits 10 slaves from his father's estate as well as Ferry Farm in Virginia, where he lived with his mother and siblings, and his formal education ends.

John Adams attends Braintree's Latin School, headed by Joseph Cleverly, where he was to be prepared for his entrance exams to Harvard.

1744

March 15: King George's War, the warm-up to the French and Indian War between France and England, begins. It was the American phase of the War of Austrian Succession, fought for dominance of North America.

November 11: Abigail Smith, the second of four children, is born to the Reverend William Smith and Elizabeth Quincy Smith in Weymouth, Massachusetts.

1745

1746

1747

1748

October 18: King George's War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle.

1749

George Washington, age 17, is appointed county surveyor of the frontier county of Culpeper. This appointment held the promise of a fruitful career.

1750

June 24: The Iron Act, which eliminated tariffs on iron imported into Britain from America and limited American manufacturing capacity, comes into effect. It was part of a larger system of Trade and Navigation Acts enacted by Britain.

1751

January 1: The royal decree overturning the colony of Georgia's ban on slavery comes into effect.

John Adams is admitted to Harvard College at age fifteen.

1752

June 15: Benjamin Franklin's kite experiment takes place.

September 3 (14): England adopts the Gregorian calendar, requiring an adjustment of 11 days to convert from Old to New Style.

1753

February: Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie appoints George Washington a major in the provincial militia.

October: Dinwiddie sends Major George Washington to the Ohio Valley to deliver a message to the French, demanding that they leave the area.

1754

May 28: The French and Indian War begins with the Battle of Jumonville Glen. Washington confronts the French in a surprise attack in the Ohio Valley. Following this skirmish, Washington and his men retreated to the makeshift Fort Necessity.

June 19: The Albany Congress is held in Albany, New York between June 19 and July 11 to discuss better relations with indigenous tribes and common defensive measures against the French threat from Canada. This was the first time American colonists had met together, providing a model for later meetings like the Stamp Act Congress and the Continental Congresses.

July 3: The Battle of Fort Necessity takes place and the French prevail; this is the only battle George Washington ever surrendered. Embarrassed by the surrender but still proud of his actions, Washington later said, "I have heard the bullets whistle; and believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

July 10: The Albany Congress adopts the Albany Plan, which would place the British North American colonies under a more centralized government. Fearing a loss of autonomy, the colonies never actually carried out the Albany Plan, but it marked the first attempt to conceive of the colonies as a collective whole united under one government.

1755

June: John Adams graduates from Harvard. Impressed by John's commencement speech, Reverend Thaddeus Mccarty, who directed the Central School of Worcester, hires John as a teacher.

November 18: John Adams writes the first entry in his diary, which he keeps updating until the end of his life.

1756

May 8-9: Great Britain officially declares war on France. France officially declares war on Great Britain. The French and Indian War officially begins.

August 21: John Adams begins his legal studies.

1757

August 8: The commander-in-chief of the French forces, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm, takes Fort William Henry. A massacre occurs after the fort changes hands, later dramatized in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*.

1758

October 21: The British make peace with the Iroquois, Shawnee, and Lenape nations, signing the Treaty of Easton. The treaty specified that the tribal nations would not fight on the side of the French against the British in the current war. In return, Pennsylvania returned large blocks of land which the Iroquois had ceded a few years before, and the British colonial governors promised to recognize Iroquois and other tribes' rights to their hunting grounds in the Ohio River valley; and to refrain from establishing colonial settlements west of the Allegheny Mountains after the conclusion of the war.

November 26: The British recapture Fort Duquesne; it is renamed "Pittsburgh."

John Adams concludes his legal studies. He moves to Braintree, MA and is admitted to the bar of Suffolk County at age 23.

1759

January 6: George Washington marries Martha Dandridge Custis.

Summer: John Adams and Abigail Smith meet for the first time.

September 13: The British win the decisive Battle of Quebec. Montcalm and Wolfe, the commanding generals of both armies, perish in battle.

1760

September 8: Montreal falls to the British; Pierre de Rigaud, Governor of New France, signed the Articles of Capitulation of Montreal, ceding the Ohio Country, Illinois Country, and the territory of modern-day Canada, ending major hostilities between France and Britain.

October 25: George II of Great Britain dies and is succeeded by his grandson George III of the United Kingdom.

1761

January: John Adams and his friend Samuel Quincy observe the first confrontation between the American colonies and the British Crown when a customs official applied for writs of assistance. It was an eye opener for him as an understanding of the relationship with the motherland.

May 25: John Adams' father dies during an influenza epidemic. Adams receives a substantial inheritance, which includes property adjoining the family home.

1762

1763

February 10: The Treaty of Paris is signed, formally ending the Seven Year's War, also known as the French and Indian War in North America. France ceded all mainland North American territories, except New Orleans, in order to retain their Caribbean sugar islands. Britain gained all territory east of the Mississippi River; Spain kept territory west of the Mississippi, but exchanged East and West Florida for Cuba.

April 27: Pontiac, the Ottawa Chief, proposes a coalition of Ottowas, Potawatomes and Hurons for the purpose of attacking Detroit.

May 9: Pontiac's forces lay siege to Detroit. That summer, his allies destroy forts at Venango, Le Boeuf and Presque Isle.

June: John Adams publishes his first newspaper pieces. Under the pseudonym "Humphrey Ploughjogger," he lampoons human nature; as "U," he espouses balance between monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

July: Men of the garrison at Fort Pitt infect besieging chiefs with blankets from the smallpox hospital. Soon faced with an epidemic, Pontiac's forces retreat.

October 7: King George III issues the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Wary of the cost of defending the colonies, George III prohibited all settlement west of the Appalachian mountains without guarantees of security from local Native nations. This was perceived as an intervention in colonial affairs and offended the thirteen colonies' claim to the exclusive right to govern lands to their west.

1764

April 5: The British Parliament passes the Revenue Act of 1764 (also known as the Sugar Act). Revenue derived from the duties on imported sugar is earmarked for the maintenance of the British army's colonial presence. In protest, Boston lawyer James Otis speaks the famous line, "No taxation without representation."

September 1: Parliament passes the Currency Act, which prohibits the colonies from issuing paper money.

October 25: John Adams marries Abigail Smith in Weymouth after two years of courtship.

1765

March 22: Parliament passes the Stamp Act. Seeking to defray some of the costs of garrisoning the colonies, Parliament required all legal documents, newspapers and pamphlets required to use watermarked, or 'stamped' paper on which a levy was placed. Only Georgia enforces it.

May 15: Parliament enacts the Quartering Act, requiring the Thirteen Colonies to provide housing, food, and other provisions to British troops.

May 29: Virginia's House of Burgesses adopts the Virginia Resolves, which claimed that under English law Virginians could be taxed only by an assembly to which they had elected representatives.

July 14: John and Abigail Adams' first child, daughter Abigail Amelia (nicknamed Nabby), is born.

August: Boston experiences increasingly violent protests and boycotts against the Stamp Act. Although John Adams doesn't back mob action, he anonymously publishes an essay in the Boston Gazette entitled "A Dissertation on Canon and Feudal Law" and states that "liberty must at all hazards be supported."

October: "The Braintree Instructions", written by John Adams, is adopted by forty towns in Massachusetts; the document affirms the unconstitutionality of taxation without representation.

October 19: A congress of delegates from nine colonies called the Stamp Act Congress adopts the Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which petitioned Parliament and the King to repeal the Stamp Act.

1766

March 18: Parliament repeals the Stamp Act and issues the Declaratory Act, which asserted its "full power and authority to make laws and statutes ... to bind the colonies and people of America ... in all cases whatsoever."

May 21: The Liberty Pole is erected in New York City in celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

Pontiac's Rebellion ends.

1767

March 15: Andrew Jackson is born in Waxhaw, S.C., the third child of Andrew Jackson, Sr., and Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson.

June 29: The Townshend Acts, named for Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend, were passed by Parliament, placing duties on many items imported into America including tea, glass, lead, and paper. John Dickinson publishes “Letter from a Philadelphian Farmer” in protest. Colonial assemblies condemn taxation without representation.

July 11: John Quincy Adams was born in Quincy, Massachusetts.

1768

January: The Adams family moves to Boston, where they settle in a white house on Brattle Street.

October 1: In response to the protests against British taxation in Massachusetts, Parliament sends 4,000 British troops to Boston.

December 28: John and Abigail Adams’ second daughter, Susana, is born.

1769

November: John Adams’ law practice booms; Adams defends John Hancock in a smuggling case and three sailors accused of murdering a navy officer.

December: The broadside “To the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City and Colony of New York” was published by the local Sons of Liberty.

1770

January 19: British soldiers and the Sons of Liberty clash in the Battle of Golden Hill in New York City; this is one of several violent incidents leading into the American Revolution.

February 4: John Adams’ daughter Susana dies at 13 months of age in Boston.

March 5: Angered by the presence of troops and Britain's colonial policy, a crowd begins harassing a group of soldiers guarding the customs house. A soldier was knocked down by a snowball and discharged his musket, sparking a volley into the crowd which kills five civilians; the incident was later called the Boston Massacre. Asked to defend the soldiers, John Adams accepts on the grounds that everyone in a free country deserves the right to counsel and a fair trial.

April 12: Parliament repeals the Townshend Acts with the exception of the tax on tea.

May 29: John and Abigail Adams' second son, Charles, is born.

June: Despite being widely criticized for taking the Massacre soldiers' case, John Adams is elected to the Massachusetts legislature.

October - December: In the Boston Massacre Trials, John Adams defends Thomas Preston; he and the six of the eight soldiers are acquitted.

October 18: The Cherokee sign the Treaty of Lochaber, under which they ceded some land in modern West Virginia.

1771

Spring: The strain of public life affects John Adams' health, and the family returns to Braintree. Adams travels frequently for his law practice, and in another year they return to Boston.

May 16: The Battle of Alamance in North Carolina formally ends a rebellion called the War of the Regulation, fought over issues of taxation and local control, that raged between 1765 and 1771. Historians are conflicted over whether the rebels (known as Regulators) wanted to lessen British control over the colonies or simply wanted to oust the corrupt officials in North Carolina.

1772

May: The Watauga Association, in modern-day Tennessee, declares itself independent. This semi-autonomous group of settlers laid the basis for what would later become the state of Tennessee and influenced other western frontier governments.

June 10: The revenue schooner *Gaspee* runs aground near Providence, Rhode Island and was burnt by locals angered by the enforcement of trade legislation.

September 15: John and Abigail Adams' third son, Thomas Boylston, is born.

November 2: Samuel Adams creates the Committees of Correspondence, a group of shadow governments organized by the patriot leaders of the thirteen colonies. These served an important role in the Revolution by disseminating the colonial interpretation of British actions between the colonies and to foreign governments. The committees of correspondence rallied opposition on common causes and established plans for collective action, and so the group of committees was the beginning of what later became a formal political union among the colonies.

1773

July: In a series of letters, Thomas Hutchinson, the Massachusetts governor, advocates for a 'great restraint of natural liberty', convincing many colonists of a planned British clamp-down on their freedoms.

May 10: In the Tea Act, an effort to support the ailing East India Company, Parliament exempts its tea from import duties and allows the Company to sell its tea directly to the colonies. Americans resented what they saw as an indirect tax subsidising a British company.

December 15: The local Sons of Liberty publishes *Association of the Sons of Liberty* in New York.

December 16: Angered by the Tea Act, American patriots disguised as Mohawk Indians dump £9,000 of East India Company tea into the Boston harbour.

1774

May to June: The Intolerable Acts are passed - they comprise four measures which stripped Massachusetts of self-government and judicial independence following the Boston Tea Party. Boston Harbor is closed and a royal governor installed. The colonies responded with a general boycott of British goods. The four measures were the Quebec Act, the Boston Port Act, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Massachusetts Government Act, as well as a second Quartering Act.

September 5 - October 26: Colonial delegates meet in the First Continental Congress to organise opposition to the Intolerable Acts; attendees include George Washington and John Adams. Alexander Hamilton writes his first political pamphlet, "A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress," supporting the right of the First Continental Congress to authorize a trade boycott of England. Hamilton signs the pamphlet as, "A Friend to America."

October 10: the colony of Virginia wins the Battle of Point Pleasant, ending Lord Dunmore's War, a conflict between Virginia and the Shawnee and Mingo Tribal Nations. As a result of this victory, the Shawnee and Mingo nations lost the right to hunt in the area and agreed to recognize the Ohio River as the boundary between Indian lands and the British colonies.

October 19: the *HMS Peggy Stewart*, a Maryland cargo vessel, is burned as a punishment for contravening the boycott on tea imports which had been imposed in retaliation for the British treatment of the people of Boston following the Boston Tea Party.

December 22: A load of tea meant for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is torched in Cumberland County, New Jersey by 40 men in what became known as the Greenwich Tea Party.

The Adamases move back to Braintree for good. Boston, the hub for anti-British protests, is too violent.

1775

January: The government of Fincastle County, Virginia issues the Fincastle Resolutions, promising resistance to the Intolerable Acts.

January - April: John Adams publishes his "Novanglus" essays, in which he argues that Parliament may regulate commerce in the colonies, but not impose taxes.

February 12: Louisa Catherine Johnson is born in London.

February 27: Parliament passes the Conciliatory Resolution, addressed individually to each of Great Britain's colonies in North America, which promised that any colony which raised taxes for the common defense and for its own civil government would be relieved of additional taxation.

March 13: One person is shot and killed by British colonial officials during a riot in Westminster, Vermont.

March 22: The government of Harford County, Maryland adopts the Bush Declaration, calling for armed revolt against Great Britain.

March 23: In the Second Virginia Convention, Patrick Henry urges the provisional legislature of Virginia to begin arming militias in the speech "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

April 19: The Battles of Lexington and Concord become the first engagements of the Revolutionary War between British troops and the Minutemen, who had been warned of the attack by Paul Revere.

May 10: A convention of delegates from Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island convened in Philadelphia to coordinate American resistance to the Intolerable Acts. The convention elected Peyton Randolph president.

May 22: The New York Provincial Congress declares itself the government of New York.

May 31: The Committee of Safety of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina adopts the Mecklenburg Resolves, annulling all laws established under the authority of the monarch or parliament of Great Britain and investing the Second Continental Congress with all legislative and executive power.

June 16: The Second Continental Congress appoints George Washington commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, nominated by John Adams. The Congress issues \$2 million bills of credit to fund the army.

June 17: The first major battle of the War of Independence is fought, the Battle of Bunker Hill. Sir William Howe dislodged William Prescott's forces overlooking Boston at a cost of 1054 British casualties to the Americans' 367. Abigail and John Quincy watch the cannon fire from Penn's Hill in Braintree.

June 20: Residents of Cumberland County, North Carolina drafts the Liberty Point Resolves, pledging to join one another in resistance against British force.

July 5-8: Congress endorses a proposal asking for recognition of American rights and the ending of the Intolerable Acts in exchange for a cease fire, called the Olive Branch Petition. Staunchly opposed by Adams, the petition pledges loyalty to England but asks that all military activity against colonists cease. The Congress also issued the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms, rejecting the authority of the Parliament over the Thirteen Colonies. The king refuses to read it. George III rejected the proposal and on 23 August 1775 declared the colonies to be in open rebellion.

October 1: Abigail's mother dies in Braintree's dysentery epidemic. The disease also killed John's brother Elihu, a soldier in the siege of Boston, earlier in the year, and incapacitated Abigail and Tommy as well.

October 13: The Second Continental Congress authorizes the establishment of a Continental Navy.

November 7: The British governor John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore of Virginia, issues Dunmore's Proclamation, declaring martial law in Virginia and promising freedom to any slave of a colonial revolutionary to join the British Armed Forces.

November 10: The Second Continental Congress establishes the Continental Marines.

1776

January 5: The Congress of the state of New Hampshire votes to establish a civil government and eventually ratifies the first state constitution.

January 9: Thomas Paine's Common Sense is published anonymously in Philadelphia

March 17: The 11-month long siege of Boston ends. The British agree to retreat from Boston peaceably if left unmolested by Washington's troops.

March 31: Abigail sends John "Remember the Ladies", in which she asks that women's rights be considered alongside men's when new national laws are created.

April: "Thoughts on Government" is written by John Adams in response to a resolution of the North Carolina Provincial Congress. He designs the three branches of American government: the executive, judicial, and legislative branches, all with a system of checks and balances.

May 2: France provides covert aid to the Americans in the war effort.

June 7: In response to Virginian Richard Henry Lee's resolution calling for independence from England, Congress names a committee to draft a formal declaration of independence. Adams asks Jefferson to compose the document.

June 13: John Adams is selected as president of the Congress Board of War. He writes the Plan of Treaties for an alliance with European nations.

July 2: Congress formally adopts the Lee Resolution, declaring independence from the British Empire, thanks in large part to Adams' impassioned arguments for independence.

July 4: Congress formally adopts the Declaration of Independence. National celebrations begin as word of it reaches the colonies.

September 15: The British occupy New York City, landing at Kip's Bay. John Adams travels to Staten Island with Benjamin Franklin and Edward Rutledge to confer with Admiral Lord Howe.

September 21-22: The Great Fire of New York rages.

December 24: In Trenton, New Jersey, Washington captures over 900 Hessian troops and their weapons while losing fewer than 10 American soldiers.

1777

January: General Washington breaks camp at Trenton to avoid a British advance, attacking the British rearguard and train near Princeton and then withdrawing to Morristown. John Adams attends the Second Continental Congress as a delegate from Massachusetts.

April 12: Henry Clay is born to Reverend John and Elizabeth Clay on a plantation in Hanover County in Virginia. Henry was the seventh of the couple's nine children.

June 14: the Flag Resolution passes, stating: "Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

July 8: Delegates in Vermont establishes the Vermont Republic and adopts the Constitution of Vermont, which abolished slavery.

July 11: Abigail gives birth to a stillborn daughter named Elizabeth on John Quincy's 10th birthday.

September 26: The British capture Philadelphia.

October 13: The British lose an army of nearly 6,000 in the surrender at Saratoga, New York.

November 15: The Second Continental Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation. States are responsible for their own judicial and legislative systems and are granted powers later held by the federal government, including coining money.

John Adams returns to Braintree where he resumes his law practice.

1778

February 6: After the United States' win at Saratoga, France formally recognizes it as an independent nation and agrees to a military alliance against its longtime foe England, as well as a commercial treaty called the Treaty of Alliance.

February 14 - April 1: Traveling with 10-year-old John Quincy, John Adams joins the joint commission in Paris, only to learn that the alliance has already been secured. When Benjamin Franklin is appointed United States minister to France, Adams returns to Braintree. During this time in France, John Quincy enrolled in L'Ecole de Mathematiques, a private academy, and began writing in his diary, a practice he would maintain until his death.

1779

March 14: In a letter to Continental Congress president John Jay, Alexander Hamilton proposes an idea initiated by fellow aide John Laurens of recruiting slaves for the Continental Army and offering them freedom in exchange for their service.

October 25: The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, written by Adams, is adopted. It will serve as the model for the U.S. Constitution and remains in effect today.

November: John Adams sails for Europe to negotiate a peace treaty with England as the sole United States representative. John Quincy and nine-year-old Charles accompany him.

1780

February 1: New York ceded its western claims, including territory west of Lake Ontario, to the Second Continental Congress.

May 4: John Adams, James Bowdoin, John Hancock, and other leaders found the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to provide a forum for a select group of scholars, members of the learned professions, and government and business leaders to work together on behalf of the democratic interests of the republic.

May 12: America suffers its worst defeat of the war in Charleston, South Carolina. Nearly 6,000 Americans surrender.

June – July: Congress appoints John Adams to negotiate a loan with the Netherlands. Before news of his commission reaches Adams, he travels to the Netherlands to explore the possibility of financial assistance. John Quincy and his younger brother Charles accompany him. John Quincy studies at the University of Leiden, Netherlands. John Adams remains in Amsterdam until July 1781, when he returns to Paris.

1781

March 1: The Articles of Confederation are ratified.

October 19: With the aid of the French army and navy, George Washington wins a decisive victory at Yorktown, Virginia, the war's final major battle. The British agree to negotiate peace.

1781 - 1783: At age 14, John Quincy traveled to St. Petersburg in Russia as secretary and translator for Francis Dana.

1782

March 5: The British Government authorises peace negotiations. They officially, but informally, recognize American independence.

March 18: John Caldwell Calhoun is born in South Carolina.

April 19: Thanks to John Adams' efforts, the Netherlands recognizes American independence. Two months later, on June 11, Adams will secure a \$2 million loan from Dutch bankers.

October: John Adams returns to Paris to negotiate a preliminary treaty between America and Great Britain.

1783

March: New York enacts the Trespass Act, allowing patriots whose homes had been seized by Tories during the Revolution to recover damages. This statute violates a provision of the Treaty of Paris, which will ban state laws interfering with debts and contracts between Patriots and Tories.

July 8: The Massachusetts Supreme Court abolishes slavery in Massachusetts. By year's end, all Northern states follow suit.

August 9: John Quincy returns to Paris to serve as secretary for his father.

September 3: the Treaty of Paris is signed by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay, ending the Revolutionary War.

October: John Adams, along with John Quincy, leaves France for London where they spend several months taking in the sights.

December 23: Following the end of the American Revolution, Washington addresses Congress in Annapolis and resigns his commission.

1784

January: John Adams returns to Amsterdam where he negotiates a second loan with the Dutch. Adams serves on a commission to secure commercial treaties for the United States.

July 21: After a month-long Atlantic crossing, Abigail and Nabby arrive in Europe. On August 7, they reunite with John in London after a five-year separation. They move to Auteuil, near Paris.

1785

February 4: At a meeting in New York, Alexander Hamilton and 31 others set forth the guiding principles for an anti-slavery group, the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves.

February 24: John Adams becomes the first U.S. minister to Great Britain.

May: John Adams' family joins him in London, taking up residence in the first American legation (embassy). John Quincy Adams returns to Boston and starts his education in Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

June 1: John Adams has his first private audience with King George III. Three weeks later, Abigail and Nabby are presented to Queen Charlotte.

September: Delegates at the Annapolis Convention issue a report drafted by Hamilton to all 13 states recommending that a general convention be called to meet in Philadelphia to render an American government adequate to the needs of the Union.

November 28: the first Treaty of Hopewell is signed between Benjamin Pickens and Cherokee Nation, setting borders between the United States and Cherokee Nation, offering the Cherokee the right to send a deputy to Congress, and ensuring that Americans in Cherokee land would be subject to Cherokee law. In January 1786, two similar treaties would be signed with the Choctaw and Chickasaw.

1786

March: Thomas Jefferson visits John Adams. He and Adams will attempt to negotiate commercial treaties with Tripoli, Portugal, and Great Britain, but they also take a garden tour across England.

June: John Adams' oldest daughter, Nabby, marries William Smith, Adams' secretary in London.

Summer: John and Abigail take pleasure trips around England, a first in their marriage. She also accompanies him to the Netherlands.

August 29: Shay's Rebellion, led by Revolutionary War veteran Daniel Shays, takes place in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was a series of violent uprisings in protest of economic and civil rights injustices and was a catalyst for the Constitutional Convention and the creation of a new government, as it was widely believed that the Articles of Confederation were insufficient.

September 11-14: The Annapolis Convention, formally titled as a Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government, is held at Mann's Tavern in Annapolis, Maryland. Twelve delegates from five states—New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia—gathered to discuss and develop a consensus about reversing the protectionist trade barriers that each state had erected. The convention was largely a failure and the final report petitioned the Congress of the Confederation for a broader constitutional convention to be held the following May in Philadelphia.

1787

May: Adams travels to Amsterdam to obtain a third loan from the Dutch.

May 25: The Constitutional Convention is held in Philadelphia, and George Washington is unanimously elected President of the convention.

July 13: The Northwest Ordinance is passed by the Congress of the Confederation of the United States. It created the Northwest Territory, the first organized territory of the United States, from lands beyond the Appalachian Mountains, between British North America and the Great Lakes to the north and the Ohio River to the south. The upper Mississippi River formed the territory's western boundary. This land was yielded to the United States by Britain in the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

September 17: Fifty-five delegates from all the colonies except Rhode Island attend the Constitutional Convention and approve the document that will become the U.S. Constitution.

October: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay begin writing The Federalist, more popularly known as The Federalist Papers. These 85 essays supporting ratification of the

Constitution appear in various New York newspapers starting this month and continuing until May 1788.

December 7-18: Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey ratify the Constitution.

John Quincy graduates from Harvard College with a Bachelor Degree in Arts. He begins studying law with Theophilus Parsons in Newburyport, MA until 1789.

1788

February 20: Adams has a farewell audience with King George. Anxious to hold office in the new Republic, Adams asked to be recalled to America.

March: Adams returns to The Hague where he negotiates a fourth loan with the Dutch.

April: John and Abigail return to Massachusetts. By July they are settled in a new home in Braintree, which Adams christens "Peacefield."

September: The Constitution is ratified and put into operation.

1789

February 4: George Washington is unanimously elected as the first President of the United States; John Adams is elected Vice President. Of the office, Adams will complain: "My country in its wisdom contrived for me the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived."

March 4: The United States Constitution came into effect.

April 30: George Washington is sworn in as the United States' first president at Federal Hall in New York. Meanwhile, John Adams establishes his new residence at Richmond Hill in New York City.

Summer: The Jay-Gardoqui Treaty, guaranteeing Spain's exclusive right to navigate the Mississippi River for the next 25 years, is signed. It was never ratified.

July 14: The French Revolution begins when a Parisian mob storms the Bastille prison.

October - December: John Adams travels from New York to Braintree between sessions of Congress.

September 24: George Washington signs the Judiciary Act of 1789 into law, establishing a separate federal judiciary.

November 21: North Carolina, by a margin of 43%, becomes the twelfth state to ratify the Constitution.

1790

In the yearlong serial publication of "Discourses on Davila," John Adams discusses "unbridled democracy's" dangers and makes comments about strong executive rule that foster his reputation as a monarchist.

January 14: Alexander Hamilton, submitting his "First Report on the Public Credit," argues for a federal assumption of all state debts to stimulate the economy and strengthen the Union.

Spring: John Quincy Adams earns his Master of Art degree from Harvard.

April: Benjamin Franklin dies. Philadelphia and other American cities stage lavish tributes.

May 26: The Southwest Territory (aka Territory South of the River Ohio) is created from North Carolina's Western frontier lands.

May 29: Rhode Island, by a margin of 3%, is the 13th state to ratify the Constitution.

July 16: Congress passes the Residence Bill, authorizing President Washington to select a permanent location for the government. Alexander Hamilton's plan for the assumption of all state debts is narrowly approved.

September: John Adams travels between New York and Philadelphia to establish a new residence at Bush Hill.

November: Abigail joins John Adams in Philadelphia. She despises the city and leaves for Massachusetts after six months, vowing never to return. Adams will spend much of each year during his vice presidency at home with her.

December: Alexander Hamilton submits a report to the House calling for the chartering of a national bank, which he argues will increase the circulation of currency and assist the financial operations of the national government.

1791

March 4: The independent Vermont Republic is admitted to the Union as Vermont, becoming the 14th state.

May: Adams is appointed president of Boston's Academy of Arts and Sciences.

May - October: John Adams travels from Philadelphia to Braintree between sessions of Congress.

December 15: Congress ratifies the Bill of Rights.

John Quincy Adams is admitted to the bar and begins practicing law in Boston.

1792

April: The Adams family returns to Braintree, part of which was incorporated as Quincy.

June 1: Kentucky County, Virginia is admitted to the union as the fifteenth state of Kentucky.

September: The monarchy in France is abolished, and the nation is declared a republic.

November: Adams returns to Philadelphia alone, leaving Abigail in Quincy.

December: Washington and Adams are reelected for a second term.

1793

January 21: France's King Louis XVI is beheaded.

February 1: Fearing the spread of revolutionary ideals and aghast at King Louis' execution, Great Britain, Prussia, and Austria declare war on France.

February 12: The Fugitive Slave Act is passed by Congress. It was intended to give effect to the Fugitive Slave Clause of the US Constitution (Article 4, Section 2, Clause 3), which was later superseded by the Thirteenth Amendment. The Clause guaranteed a right for a slaveholder to recover an escaped slave. The Act, "An Act respecting fugitives from justice, and persons escaping from the service of their masters," created the legal mechanism by which that could be accomplished.

February 18: *Chisholm v. Georgia* is decided; it is the first Supreme Court case of significance and impact and had to do with the ability of states to be tried in federal courts.

April 22: Washington issues a Proclamation of Neutrality expressing his intention to stay out of the European war. Alexander Hamilton defends the decision in seven newspaper essays signed "Pacificus." James Madison responds in a series of essays under the name "Helvidius."

August: A yellow fever outbreak begins in Philadelphia, causing most of its residents, including George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, to flee the city. By the time the epidemic subsides

in late October, about 5,000 people will have died. Jefferson resigns as Secretary of State and returns to Virginia, leaving Hamilton in a commanding position in Washington's cabinet.

September 5: France's Reign of Terror begins. Over the next 10 months, tens of thousands of "counterrevolutionaries" will be killed. The Reign will end with leader Maximilien Robespierre's arrest and execution on July 28, 1794.

October 28: Eli Whitney applies for a patent for his cotton gin.

1794

July: The Whiskey Rebellion ends. In 1791, the government passed a tax on whiskey to try to recover financially from the American Revolution after Washington received enthusiastic support for the tax from local government officials in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Protests from small producers and citizens began shortly after, escalating into full-blown violent conflict that began and ended in 1794. Opposition to the whiskey tax and the rebellion itself built support for the Republicans, which overtook Washington's Federalist Party for power in 1802.

August - November: The Nickajack Expedition brings a close to the Cherokee–American wars, a series of battles and skirmishes that raged on the frontier in the south between 1776 and 1794. The Cherokee Nation is founded at the end of the wars.

August 29: Charles Adams marries Sally Smith, Nabby's sister-in-law, in New York.

President George Washington appoints John Quincy Adams to be Minister to the Netherlands. He remains in this position until 1797.

1795

January 29: The Naturalization Act of 1795 is signed into law, extending the residence requirement for persons seeking naturalization from two to five years. The Act also specified that naturalized citizenship was reserved only for "free white person[s]."

February 7: The Eleventh Amendment, which bars the federal government from hearing suits brought against a state by a citizen of another state or of a foreign country, is ratified, negating the decision in *Chisholm v. Georgia*.

August 3: The Western Confederacy, a group of Native tribes, signs the Treaty of Greenville, ceding much territory in modern Ohio to the United States in exchange for an annual subsidy and ending the Northwest Indian War, which had been raging since 1785.

August 29: Charles Adams marries Sally Smith in New York.

October 27: Spain and the United States signed Pinckney's Treaty, fixing the boundary between the United States and the Spanish colonies and guaranteeing freedom of navigation on the Mississippi River.

1796

May: John Adams travels to Quincy, where he will spend the summer working on his farm. He returns to Philadelphia in November to preside over the Senate.

June 1: Tennessee is admitted as a state in the Union.

December: John Adams narrowly defeats Thomas Jefferson in the presidential election. They and their respective parties are bitterly divided on relations with France.

1797

March 4: John Adams is sworn in as the second President of the United States. Washington retires from the presidency and all public life. By leaving office after two terms, Washington set a precedent that has been held to by most of the American presidents who followed him. He returns to Mount Vernon and enjoys a peaceful retirement.

May: Relenting on her promise never to return to Philadelphia, Abigail joins John Adams in the temporary capital.

Summer: Committed to maintaining neutrality, Adams announces the appointment of a peace mission to France.

June 1: John Adams appoints John Quincy Adams as minister to Prussia. Fearing his father will be charged with nepotism, John Quincy hesitates before accepting the position.

July 26: John Quincy Adams marries Louisa Catherine Johnson, British-born daughter of an American merchant and consul.

1798

March - April: The so-called Quasi-War with France escalates with the XYZ Affair, in which the French foreign minister demands a bribe from the U.S. government in exchange for the resumption of diplomatic talks.

May - June: Opposed to a declaration of war but favoring precautionary military buildup, John Adams proposes the creation of the Department of the Navy. Congress approves.

July 14: Adams signs into law the four-part Alien and Sedition Acts. The Naturalization and Alien Acts curb immigrants' rights; the Sedition Act restricts freedom of speech and press and makes offenses punishable by fines and imprisonment. In response, Kentucky and Virginia issue the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, written in secret by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison respectively, which held that the Alien and Sedition Acts were unconstitutional. The resolutions argued that the states had the right and the duty to declare as unconstitutional those acts of Congress that were not authorized by the Constitution.

August: Abigail falls ill en route to Quincy, appearing near death for a time. She recovers after several months but remains weak. John will return to Philadelphia in November, alone.

1799

January 30: John Adams signs the Logan Act into law; it criminalizes negotiation by unauthorized persons with foreign governments having a dispute with the United States. The intent behind the Act is to prevent unauthorized negotiations from undermining the government's position. The Act was passed following George Logan's unauthorized negotiations with France in 1798.

February: Pennsylvania auctioneer John Fries organizes meetings to discuss a collective response to new taxes levied on real estate and slaves, leading to an armed revolt among Pennsylvania Dutch farmers.

February 18: Against the wishes of his Federalist Party, John Adams appoints a second peace delegation to France.

November 9: Napoleon Bonaparte overthrows the Directory (France's executive branch) and assumes near-dictatorial powers. In 1804 he anoints himself emperor.

December 14: George Washington passed away at age 67 from a throat infection called epiglottitis in his bedroom at Mount Vernon. He was surrounded by close friends and his loving wife Martha. Adams calls him the nation's "most esteemed ... citizen."

1800

January 1: A pirate squadron loyal to the pro-French Haitian general André Rigaud attacks a convoy of American merchant ships in the Gulf of Gonâve. The Haitian squadron captured two American ships at great cost in casualties.

January 7: The Virginia General Assembly adopt the Report of 1800, arguing that the Alien and Sedition Acts violated the Constitution and for the compact theory that the United States is a free association of states.

April 24: John Adams signs into law an act establishing the Library of Congress and moving the national capital from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

May: A Federalist caucus in Congress selects Adams and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney as the party's nominees in the election of 1800. The Republicans nominate Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr.

May 10: The Slave Trade Act of 1800, which forbade residents and citizens of the United States from investing in or serving aboard a ship engaged in the business of transporting slaves into the United States, is signed into law.

May 21: President Adams issues a general amnesty to all participants in the Fries rebellion.

June 7: John Marshall becomes Secretary of State.

August 4: The second census of the United States is conducted. The total population of the USA was 5,308,483 and the center of its population was 18 miles west of Baltimore, Maryland.

August 15: In a decision in *Bas v. Tingy*, the Supreme Court held that France was an enemy of the United States under a 1799 salvage law because, although Congress had not declared war, it had taken actions concomitant with a state of war.

September: John Adams' nemesis, fellow Federalist Alexander Hamilton, publishes the vitriolic "Letter ... Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq.," which attacks Adams' reelection bid.

September 30: France and the United States signed the Convention of 1800, also known as the Treaty of Morfontaine, ending the quasi-war between them. The Convention terminated the Treaty of Alliance and guaranteed that each nation would grant the other most favoured nation status.

November 1: Adams becomes the first president to live in the recently completed President's House in Washington, D.C. Abigail will join him mid-November, before the election.

November 30: John Adams' son Charles Adams dies of liver failure at age 30, having suffered from alcoholism for many years.

December 3: The Electoral College cast an equal number of votes for Democratic-Republicans Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, sending them to a runoff election in the House. Eventually, Thomas Jefferson prevails and defeats John Adams for the Presidency.

1801

January 20: John Marshall is appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

March 3: The Sedition Act expires.

March 4: John Adams returns to Quincy, Massachusetts. Thomas Jefferson is inaugurated as the nation's third U.S. President. Aaron Burr is vice president.

April 12: John Quincy and Louisa Adams have their first child, George Washington Adams.

John Quincy Adams is elected to the Massachusetts State Legislature.

1802

April 24: The state of Georgia enters into the Compact of 1802 with the federal government. In it, the United States paid Georgia 1.25 million U.S. dollars for its central and western lands (the Yazoo lands, now Alabama and Mississippi, respectively), and promised that the U.S. government would extinguish American Indian land titles in Georgia.

May 22: Martha Washington, the first First Lady of the United States, dies.

October 5: John Adams begins his Autobiography. Writing it will occupy him for the next five years.

1803

February 24: The United States Supreme Court overturns its first U.S. law in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*, establishing the context of judicial review as they declared a statute within the Constitution void. This established the Supreme Court's position as an equal member of the three branches of United States government.

March 1: Ohio is admitted to the Union as the 17th U.S. state.

April 30: President Thomas Jefferson doubles the size of the United States of America with his purchase of the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon's France, paving the way for the western expansion from Missouri to the Pacific Coast that would mark the entire history of the 19th century. The price of the purchase included bonds of \$11,250,000 and \$3,750,000 in payments to United States citizens with claims against France.

July 4: John Quincy and Louisa Adams have their second child, John Adams II.

December 20: The United States of America takes title to the Louisiana Purchase.

1804

February 15: New Jersey becomes the last northern state to abolish slavery.

May: Jefferson announces the exploration of the Louisiana Purchase lands by the Lewis and Clark expedition.

May 14: Lewis and Clark begin their expedition from St. Louis and Camp Dubois. The journey begins with navigation of the Missouri River.

June 15: The Twelfth Amendment to the United States Constitution, providing the procedure for electing the President and Vice President, is ratified.

July 11: Vice President Aaron Burr kills Federalist leader Alexander Hamilton in a duel in New Jersey.

October 26: The Lewis and Clark Expedition arrives at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri Rivers, in what is now the state of North Dakota, where they camped until the spring of 1805 at the hospitality of the Mandan and Minitari Indian villages.

November 4: Thomas Jefferson wins reelection over Charles Pinckney with 162 to 14 Electoral College votes.

1805

January 11: The Michigan Territory is established.

May 16: Thomas Boylston Adams marries Ann Harrod.

June 13: Meriweather Lewis and four companions confirm their correct heading by sighting the Great Falls of the Missouri River, as the Lewis and Clark expedition continues west.

December 8: Members of the Lewis and Clark expedition upon sighting the Pacific Ocean on November 15, build Fort Clatsop, a log fort near the mouth of the Columbia River in present-day Oregon. They would spend the winter of 1805-1806 in the newly constructed fort.

1806

March 23: Explorers Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery begin the several thousand mile trek back to St. Louis, Missouri.

March 29: The National Road, also known as the Great National Pike or the Cumberland Road, the first federally funded highway that ran between Cumberland, Maryland to Ohio, is approved

by President Thomas Jefferson with the signing of legislation and appropriation of \$30,000. The highway ran through three states; Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.

1807

February 17: Vice President Aaron Burr is arrested for treason in Alabama, charged with a scheme to annex parts of Louisiana and Mexico into an independent republic. Three months later, a grand jury indicts the former Vice President.

March 2: Congress passes an act that prohibits the importation of slaves into any port within the confines of the United States from any foreign land. It was to take effect on the 1st of January 1808.

June: The American ship *Chesapeake* is fired upon by the British ship *Leopard*, causing an international incident.

August 17: The first practical steamboat journey was made by Robert Fulton in the steamboat *Clermont*, who navigated the Hudson River from New York City to Albany in thirty-two hours, a trip of 150 miles. This becomes the first commercial steamboat service in the world.

August 18: John Quincy and Louisa Catherine have their third child, Charles Francis Adams.

September 1: Aaron Burr is acquitted of treason.

December 22: Thomas Jefferson signs the Embargo Act into law. It imposes an embargo on all foreign nations, in response to violations of American neutrality through the seizing of American merchant vessels by France and Great Britain in the Napoleonic Wars.

John Quincy Adams is appointed to the U.S. Senate. His refusal to adhere strictly to the Federalist Party's platform and the Federalists' resulting frustration with him eventually led John Quincy to switch to the Democratic-Republican party.

1808

January 1: The importation of slaves is outlawed, although between 1808 and 1860, more than 250,000 slaves were illegally imported.

November 4: James Madison is elected as the 4th President of the United States, defeating Charles C. Pinckney.

1809

February 3: The Illinois Territory is created.

February 12: Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, is born in a humble Hardin County, Kentucky log cabin to carpenter Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks.

March 1: Thomas Jefferson signs the Non-Intercourse Act into law to replace the Embargo Act of 1807. This Act lifted all embargoes on American shipping except for those bound for British or French ports. Its intent was to damage the economies of the United Kingdom and France. Like its predecessor, the Embargo Act, it was mostly ineffective, and contributed to the coming of the War of 1812. In addition, it seriously damaged the economy of the United States.

March 4: James Madison is inaugurated, succeeding Thomas Jefferson as President of the United States.

President James Madison appoints John Quincy Adams as the first U.S Minister to Russia.

1810

June 23: The Pacific Fur Company is formed by John Jacob Astor.

August 6: Research reveals that the center of the population of the United States, listed as 7,239,881 in the 1810 census, was only 40 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. in the state of Virginia.

September 8: Thirty-three employees of the Pacific Fur Company founded by John Jacob Astor embark on a six month journey around South America from New York Harbor. Arriving at the mouth of the Columbia River on the ship Tonquin, in present day Oregon, they found the fur-trading town of Astoria.

October 8: Nabby undergoes a mastectomy for breast cancer. The rare operation, performed without anesthesia, initially appears successful.

The Supreme Court issued a decision in *Fletcher v. Peck* that marked the first time the Supreme Court ruled a state law unconstitutional.

1811

January: After 11 years, John Adams initiates correspondence with Jefferson; it will continue until their deaths.

May 11: The contract for construction of the Cumberland Road is assigned. It broadly followed Braddock's Road, a military route used by George Washington in 1754.

October 11: The first steam-powered ferry service between New York City and Hoboken, New Jersey is started on John Steven's ship, the *Juliana*.

November 7: The Battle of Tippecanoe (in present-day Indiana), considered the first battle of the War of 1812, takes place between Tecumseh's brother, The Prophet, and William Henry Harrison's army. Harrison wins the battle.

November 27: Henry Clay is elected into the U.S. House of Representatives.

December 16: An earthquake near New Madrid, in the Mississippi Valley, reverses the course of the Mississippi River for a period of time. This quake was the first of two major earthquakes which preceded the largest quake ever in the United States two months later.

While in Russia, John Quincy and Louisa Adams have their third child, Louisa Catherine, who died in her first year of life.

1812

February 7: With an estimated magnitude of 7.4 to 8.3, the final New Madrid earthquake strikes near New Madrid, Missouri. This quake was the largest earthquake ever recorded in the continental United States, destroying one-half of the town of New Madrid. It was felt strongly for 50,000 square miles, created new lakes, caused numerous aftershocks, and reversed the course of the Mississippi River. A request by William Clark, the Missouri territory governor, for federal help, actually one month earlier after the first quake recorded, may have been the first request for disaster relief.

April 8: Louisiana is admitted into the Union as the 18th state.

June 1: U.S. President James Madison asks Congress to declare war on the United Kingdom. Before the vote could be approved, British ships raise a blockade against the United States.

June 18: Although unaware of the blockade at the time of their vote, Madison signs a declaration after Congress narrowly approves war with Great Britain. Western states generally favored the action while New England states disapproved. This included the state of Rhode Island, which would refuse to participate in the War of 1812. The war officially begins.

June – August: Riots break out in Baltimore in protest of the war.

August 13: August naval battles in the War of 1812 begin with the United States Navy defeating the British when the *U.S.S. Essex* captured *Alert*. Three days later, the tide would turn in British favor as English forces capture Fort Detroit without a fight. This would be followed up on

August 19 when the *U.S.S. Constitution* secured another victory for the Navy of the United States off the coast of Nova Scotia when it destroyed the British frigate *Guerriere*, earning the nickname "Old Ironsides" when British shot bounded off the Constitution's side.

October 30 - December 2: President James Madison defeats De Witt Clinton in the U.S. presidential election, securing a second term as the United States engages in the War of 1812 by an Electoral College margin of 128 votes to 89.

November 1: Governor of the Southwest Territory, William Blount, authorizes Andrew Jackson to mobilize troops for southern expedition.

1813

August 14: Nabby Adams dies of breast cancer at age 48.

October 5: The warrior Tecumseh is killed at the Battle of the Thames (Canada), and American troops secure the frontier of Detroit. Amidst concerns over possible Spanish alliances with southwestern Indians, Jackson is ordered by Tennessee's governor into warfare against the Red Stick Creeks.

November 3: Mass slaughter of the residents at the Creek village of Talluschattee (Tallaseehatchee) in Alabama under Jackson friend and Tennessee state militia general John Coffee (claimed as a retaliation for Indian slaughter of Americans at Fort Mims). Jackson unofficially adopts the Indian child Lyncoya who is found orphaned after the onslaught.

November 9: Jackson's troops claim victory at the Red Stick village of Talladega

1814

March 27: Battle of Tohopeka (Horseshoe Bend). Jackson's volunteers are joined by Creek and Cherokee allies. The great loss of life among the Red Sticks leads to the surrender of Red Eagle and the Creek rebellion is defeated. 23 million acres of Indian-occupied lands will be ceded to the U.S., including lands of former allies as well as enemies, and subsequently opened to American land speculators and farmers for settlement.

May 24: Andrew Jackson is appointed as Creek treaty negotiator, replacing Thomas Pinckney.

August: Peace negotiations begin in Ghent.

August 9: The Treaty of Fort Jackson is imposed upon the Creek Nation.

August 24-25: The White House is burned by British forces upon the occupation of Washington, D.C. This act, in retaliation for the destruction by U.S. troops of Canadian public buildings, causes President Madison to evacuate. The British advance would be halted by Maryland militia

three weeks later on September 12. Another United States president, James Monroe, would have to wait three years before he could reoccupy the executive mansion.

September 11: The Battle of Lake Champlain is won by U.S. naval forces with the *U.S.S. Ticonderoga* leading the way.

September 13-14: Francis Scott Key writes the words to the Star Spangled Banner during the twenty-five hour bombardment of Fort McHenry at the head of the river leading to the Baltimore harbor.

December 1-14: Andrew Jackson arrives in New Orleans and imposes martial law in the city. Contingents of free black soldiers and loyalist Creek Indians join the American side over the objections of slaveholders.

December 24: John Quincy Adams heads the American delegation that sign the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812. The Americans and British diplomats agree to return to the status quo from before the war. Word of the treaty travels slowly back to the U.S.

1815

January 8: On the Chalmette plantation at New Orleans, five thousand three hundred British troops still unaware of the peace treaty signed two weeks earlier, but not ratified until February 17, attack American forces in the last battle of the War of 1812. Major General Andrew Jackson leads his American soldiers to victory over British troops under the command of Sir Edward Pakenham. British troops take over two thousand casualties; American forces seventy-one.

February: News of the American victory at New Orleans reaches Washington.

February 6: The first American railroad charter is granted by the state of New Jersey to John Stephens.

February 17: The Treaty of Ghent is ratified and President Madison declares the war over. Andrew Jackson gains celebrity status as a military hero of what was termed by many the Second American Revolution.

August 6: Piracy on the high seas by Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli is effectively ended by a flotilla from the United States.

December 25: The oldest continuing performance arts organization in the United States, the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, gives its first performance.

President James Madison appoints John Quincy Adams as Minister to Great Britain.

1816

April 10: President James Madison approves bill chartering the Second Bank of the U.S. The Mount Tambora volcano erupts, causing a “Year without a Summer” in the northern hemisphere due to global cooling.

April 27: The Tariff Act imposes a 25% duty on various manufactures, including those made of wool and cotton.

November 1 - December 4: James Monroe defeats Rufus King in the United States presidential election, garnering 183 Electoral College votes to 34 for the Federalist King.

December 11: The territory of Indiana is admitted into the United States as the 19th state.

1817

January 7: The Second Bank of the U.S. begins operations out of Philadelphia, on a twenty-year charter (1816-1836).

March 4: James Monroe is inaugurated as the President of the United States, succeeding James Madison. His vice president, Daniel D. Tompkins, who would serve alongside Monroe for his entire eight years, was also inaugurated.

March 5: John Quincy Adams becomes Secretary of State to President James Monroe for two consecutive terms, holding the post until 1824.

April 28-29: The Rush-Bagot treaty is signed. This would limit the amount of armaments allowed on the Great Lakes by British and American forces.

July 4: The construction of the Erie Canal begins in Rome, New York. The first section between Rome and Utica would be completed two years later. The canal would eventually connect the Atlantic Ocean, through the Hudson River, to the Great Lakes, with 83 locks over its 363 miles. The canal, when completed in 1825, would cut transport costs by 90%.

July 12: The Boston *Columbian Centinel* coins the term “the Era of Good Feelings”, describing the national mood between 1815 and 1825. Although the “era” is generally considered coextensive with President James Monroe’s two terms (1817–25), it really began in 1815, when for the first time, thanks to the ending of the Napoleonic Wars, American citizens could afford to pay less attention to European political and military affairs.

December: Andrew Jackson takes command of the suppression of the Seminoles, leading to the First Seminole War.

December 10: The United States of America admits Mississippi as its 20th state.

1818

February: Frederick Douglass is born in Holmes Hill Farm in Tuckahoe, Talbot County, Maryland. His mother was Harriet Bailey, a slave, his father was a white man believed to be his master Aaron Anthony. He is separated from his mother as an infant.

March 15: Andrew Jackson and his American army invade Florida in the Seminole War, causing repercussions with Spain as negotiations to purchase the territory had just begun.

April: Andrew Jackson destroys the Seminole town of Mikasuki, captures St. Marks in Spanish Florida, and attacks Bowlegs's Town.

April 4: The flag of the United States is officially adopted by Congress with the configuration of thirteen red and white stripes and one star for each state in the union. At the time of adoption, with the most recent addition of Mississippi, the flag had twenty stars.

May 24: Andrew Jackson captures Pensacola.

October 19: Andrew Jackson negotiates and signs a treaty with the Chickasaws called the Treaty of Tuscaloosa. It is ratified by the U.S. Senate on January 6, 1819. The United States agreed to pay the Chickasaws \$300,000, at the rate of \$20,000 annually for 15 years, in return for the right to all Chickasaw land east of the Mississippi River and north of the Mississippi state line.

October 20: The northern boundary of the United States and Canada is established between the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. Its location from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains would be the 49th parallel.

October 28: Abigail Adams dies in Quincy of typhoid fever. She is 73.

December 3: The state of Illinois is admitted to the Union, making the U.S.A. a republic with twenty-one states.

1819

January 2: The first financial crisis in the United States, the Panic of 1819, occurs, leading to foreclosures, bank failures, and unemployment. Several causes have been identified, including the heavy amount of borrowing by the government to finance the War of 1812, as well as the tightening of credit by the Second Bank of the U.S. in response to risky lending practices by wildcat banks in the west.

January 20: Henry Clay criticizes the invasion of Florida in the U.S. House of Representatives, as Andrew Jackson is on his way to Washington.

February 8: The House of Representatives exonerates Jackson, though rumors swirl that the Florida invasion protected land speculation there by Jackson and friends.

February 15: The Tallmadge Amendment is passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, stating that slavery would be barred in the new state of Missouri, which becomes the opening vote in the Missouri Compromise controversy.

February 22-24: The territory of Florida is ceded to the United States by Spain in the Adams-Onís Treaty, which was negotiated by John Quincy Adams for the United States.

May 22: The American steamship Savannah, under part steam and sail-power, crosses the Atlantic Ocean from Savannah, Georgia to Liverpool, England, arriving on June 20.

December 14: Alabama became the 22nd state.

The Supreme Court's decision in *McCulloch v. Maryland* prohibited state laws from infringing upon federal Constitutional authority.

1820

March 3: The Missouri Compromise bill, sponsored by Henry Clay, was signed into law, providing for the admission of the District of Maine into the Union as a free state and of the southeastern portion of the Missouri Territory into the Union as the slave state of Missouri. It further provided that any additional states admitted from part of the Missouri Territory would be slave or free depending on whether they fell south or north, respectively, of the parallel 36°30' north.

March 15: The state of Maine is admitted to the Union. Massachusetts's 14th congressional district is abolished.

April 24: The Land Act of 1820 was signed into law, ending the provision of credit to individual buyers of federal land and simultaneously reducing the minimum price and size of tracts that could be sold.

May 3: The seven-member United States House Committee on Agriculture, a standing committee of the House, was established.

May 15: The Tenure of Office Act (1820) was passed by the Congress, limiting the term in office of civil servants to four years.

August 7: The population of America continues to rise. The census of 1820 now includes 9,638,453 people living in the United States, 33% more than in 1810. The most populated state is New York, with 1,372,812 residents. The center of U.S. population now reaches 16 miles east of Moorefield, West Virginia.

September 28: To prove that a tomato is not poisonous, Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson eats one in public in Salem, New Jersey.

October 18: The Choctaw and the United States sign the Treaty of Doak's Stand, under which the former ceded roughly half their territory to Mississippi, agreeing to be forced west into modern Arkansas.

November 1 - December 6: The election of James Monroe to a second term in office comes with a landslide victory in the Electoral College with Monroe defeating John Quincy Adams by a tally of 231 to 1 (the single vote for John Quincy came from New Hampshire). This was the third and last presidential election in which a candidate effectively ran unopposed.

1821

February 23: The first pharmacy college is founded in the Philadelphia College of Apothecaries. This same year, the first women's college in the United States of America, Troy Female Seminary, is founded by Emma Willard.

March: Andrew Jackson is appointed governor of Florida Territory.

July 10: Possession of the territory of Florida is taken by the United States after its purchase is completed with Spain. No money exchanged hands between Spain and the U.S. in this purchase; the U.S. agreed to pay five million dollars to citizens for property damage.

August 10: Missouri becomes the 24th state, admitted under the Missouri Compromise.

1822

February 13: Advertisements for Ashley's Hundred, organized by General William H. Ashley and Major Andrew Henry, to ascend the Missouri River on a fur trading mission, appear in Missouri newspapers. The men who would answer the call to employ included Jedediah Smith and Jim Bridger. Over the next decade, these expeditions would leave St. Louis at irregular intervals.

March 30: Florida becomes an official territory of the United States.

1823

April 25: The War Department issues order for an expedition up the Red River and along the 49th parallel led by Stephen Long, which would mark the point of the official border between the United States and Canada.

December 2: In a speech before Congress, James Monroe announces the Monroe Doctrine, stating the policy that European intervention anywhere in the Americas is opposed and that he would establish American neutrality in future European wars.

1824

March 11: The Bureau of Indian Affairs is established by the United States War Department. They appoint Ely Parker, a Seneca tribe member, as its first director. This department is meant to regulate trade with Indian tribes.

April 17: A frontier treaty between the United States and Russia is signed, negotiated by John Quincy Adams. Russia agreed to set its southern border at 54 degrees, 40 minutes and allow U.S. ships within the one hundred mile limit of its Pacific territories.

May 22: The Tariff Act of 1824 becomes law.

May 24: In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the first strike by female workers occurs.

December 2: When the Electoral College vote ending on December 2 yields no majority, John Quincy Adams is elected president by the House of Representatives on February 9, 1825. He outpolled fellow Democrat Republicans, now a loose coalition of competing factions, including Andrew Jackson, who had actually received a higher number of Electoral College votes, 99, than Adams, 84. It was not a majority due to votes for Henry Clay, 37, and William Crawford, 41. In the first election with popular vote totals, Adams garnered less votes there as well, with 105,321 to 155,872 to Jackson.

The Supreme Court decision in *Gibbons v. Ogden* affirmed federal over state authority in interstate commerce.

1825

February 12: The United States and several unauthorized representatives of the Muscogee nation signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, under which the latter ceded their territory east of the Mississippi River to Georgia and Alabama.

March 3: The Crimes Act of 1825 is signed into law; it extended the authority of the federal government to prosecute a number of crimes and which included the first Assimilative Crimes Act, extending the laws of the surrounding states into federal enclaves.

March 4: John Quincy Adams is inaugurated as President, with John C. Calhoun as his Vice President.

March 7: Henry Clay is appointed Secretary of State by President John Quincy Adams. Andrew Jackson accuses them of a "corrupt bargain".

June 3: The Kaw cede much of their territory in Missouri and modern Kansas to the United States.

October 14: Jackson resigns from the U.S. Senate. He is nominated again as a candidate for the U.S. presidency by the Tennessee legislature. The "Jackson party" is born, merging Democrat-Republicans and Jeffersonian-Republicans opposed to strong central government. They would become known simply as Democrats.

October 26: Use of the Erie Canal begins in Buffalo, New York with the first boat departing for New York City. This opened up the Great Lakes region by cutting the travel time between the two cities one third and shipping costs nine tenths. The cost of the canal was \$7 million.

November 7: The United States and the Shawnee sign the Treaty of St. Louis, under which the latter sold the territory around Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

November 26: The first experimental steam locomotive is built and operated by John Stevens, of Hoboken, New Jersey.

December 5: The United States and Central America sign the United States–Central America Treaty, under which each granted the other most favoured nation status with respect to trade.

December 9: The Committee on Agriculture, now the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, a standing committee of the Senate, is established.

Frederick Douglass is separated from his grandmother and moved to the Wye House plantation, the Great House, owned by Colonel Lloyd. Too young to work in the plantation, he ran errands and kept the yard clean. He observed the slaves' brutal conditions working under Aaron Anthony.

1826

April 1: The internal combustion engine named the "Gas Or Vapor Engine" is patented by Samuel Morey.

July 4: John Adams dies at age 91. Thomas Jefferson dies at age 83. John Adams' famous last words are "Thomas Jefferson survives," but Jefferson too had died only hours earlier at Monticello.

September 3: The first United States warship to navigate the world, the U.S.S. Vincennes, leaves New York City under the command of William Finch.

December 26: A group of settlers in Texas make the first attempt to secede from Mexico as the Fredonian Republic. The Republic of Fredonia lasts one month, causes the Mexican government to curb immigration from U.S. to region, and increases dissatisfaction that eventually leads to the Texas Revolution.

Frederick Douglass is sent to work with Hugh Auld in Baltimore as a caretaker of his toddler son, Thomas. Sophia Auld teaches him the alphabet and Douglass becomes determined to learn to read and write.

1827

February 26: The Senate ratifies the Treaty of Limits that establishes the Sabine River as the border between the U.S. and Mexico, in agreement with the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819.

February 28: The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is incorporated, and would become the first railroad in the United States to offer transportation for people and commercial goods.

July 4: Slavery is abolished in New York State.

1827-1828: The new presidential campaign is a highly contentious rematch between Adams and Jackson. Personal aspersions are cast against Jackson's wife and mother and Jackson is faulted for a murderous past. Meanwhile, Jacksonians level charges of elitism against Adams. They stage a stirring grassroots campaign with demonstrations, barbecues, and parades, with the hickory pole as a dominant symbol.

1828

January 12: The Treaty of Limits with Mexico goes into effect.

February-March: John Binns and the National-Republicans publish the now-famous "coffin handbill" highlighting Jackson's harshness towards militiamen who served under his command in the Creek War and executions that took place under his military orders.

April 14: The copyright for *The American Dictionary of the English Language* is registered and the book published that year by Noah Webster.

May 19: The Tariff of 1828 Act is passed by Congress and signed into law by President Adams. Higher (protective) tariff rates are seen as detrimental by southern planters and advantageous to northern manufacturers. The economic policy is denounced as a "tariff of abominations" by its detractors.

October 28: Opposing the Tariff of Abominations, the state of South Carolina begins the process of a formal nullification campaign, declaring the right of state nullification of federal laws. John Calhoun writes and publishes the “South Carolina Exposition and Protest”, though he does not claim authorship of it. In it, he proposes Calhoun’s Doctrine of Nullification and builds on Jefferson and Madison’s idea that a state has the right to reject federal law proposed in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions.

October 31 - December 2: After a tumultuous four years of national politics, the election for president sees a popular and electoral college vote victory of 178-83 for Andrew Jackson over President John Quincy Adams. John C. Calhoun will be Vice President.

November 4: Martin Van Buren is elected Governor of New York.

December 22: As the Jacksons prepare for their move to Washington, Rachel Donelson Jackson takes ill and dies of heart failure, in Tennessee. A bereaved Jackson blames the bitter campaign and aspersions directed against his wife for her demise.

1829

January 1: Martin Van Buren resigns from the U.S. Senate and is inaugurated as Governor of New York.

March 4: Andrew Jackson is inaugurated as 7th President of the United States.

March 6: Martin Van Buren becomes President Jackson’s Secretary of State.

April 30: George Washington Adams commits suicide at age 28.

June 27: British scientist James Smithson dies, bequeathing one hundred thousand pounds (\$500,000) from his estate for the initial funding of what would become the Smithsonian Institution.

July 23: William Austin Burt, of the United States, invents and patents the typewriter, at the time called the typographer.

1830

April 6: Joseph Smith organizes the Mormon Church, known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, in Fayette, New York. He had published the Book of Mormon on March 26, 1830.

May 28: Congress passes the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the President to negotiate removal treaties. It increased pressure on Tribal Nations to sign land-exchange treaties and move west.

June 1: The United States continues to expand, increasing its population 33% in one decade to 12,860,702 in the 1830 census. The center of U.S. population moved west, but only slightly, to a point nineteen miles west, southwest of Moorefield, West Virginia.

September 15: The National Negro Convention begins in Philadelphia, a gathering organized to discuss the hopelessness of contending against oppression in the United States and the question of whether black people should be encouraged to emigrate, en masse, to Canada. Frederick Douglass and Bishop Richard Allen, among others, are in attendance. The convention results in the organizing of a group called the American Society of Free Persons of Colour, for Improving their Condition in the United States; for Purchasing Lands; and, for the Establishing of a Settlement in Upper Canada.

November 1: John Quincy Adams is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, representing southeastern Massachusetts. He will serve nine consecutive terms in Congress, until 1848.

1831

January 1: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp begin publishing *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper.

March 19: The first bank robbery in United States history occurs at the City Bank of New York, which Edward Smith robbed of \$245,000.

June 9: Henry Clay secures a seat in the U.S. Senate.

June 18: The Petticoat Affair ends with the resignation of several members of Jackson's cabinet, including the resignation of John Eaton on June 18th. It was a scandal involving members of President Andrew Jackson's Cabinet and their wives. Led by Floride Calhoun, wife of Vice President John C. Calhoun, these women (the "petticoats") socially ostracized John Eaton, the Secretary of War, and his wife Peggy over disapproval of the circumstances surrounding their marriage and what they considered her failure to meet the moral standards of a cabinet wife. The affair shook up the Jackson administration and led to the resignation of all but one cabinet member. Van Buren becomes minister to Great Britain and Eaton governor of Florida Territory. Lewis Cass becomes secretary of war.

August 21: Nat Turner leads the first and only effective and sustained slave rebellion in U.S. history, in which roughly 57 people are killed.

December: National Republicans nominate Henry Clay of Kentucky (a defender of the Second Bank of the U.S.) as their candidate for the U.S. presidency.

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia is brought to the Supreme Court by Chief John Ross of Cherokee Nation; John Marshall, chief justice of the court, wrote that the Cherokees were a "domestic dependent nation" under the protection and tutelage of the United States.

1832

March 3: *Worcester v. Georgia* is brought to the Supreme Court, which declared that Georgia had violated the Cherokee Nation's sovereign status and wrongfully intruded into its special treaty relationship with the United States. President Jackson, however, refused to enforce the decision and continued to pressure the Cherokees to leave the Southeast.

March 24: The Creek signed the Treaty of Cusseta, which divided up Creek lands into individual allotments. Creeks could either sell their allotments and receive funds to remove to the west, or stay in Alabama as state and federal citizens, who would have to submit to state laws.

April 8: The Black Hawk War begins and would rage from Illinois to Wisconsin through September. It would consequently lead to the removal of Sauk and Fox Indians west, across the Mississippi River.

April 20: The first act of Congress to protect a natural resource was signed by President Andrew Jackson. It reserved four parcels of land with hot mineral springs in Arkansas Territory at Hot Springs.

July 14: Jackson signs the Tariff of 1832 into law.

October 8-10: The six year campaign known as the Trail of Tears begins when Washington Irving, Henry Levitt Ellsworth, and Captain Jesse Bean, at the Arkansas River, begin one of the first steps in the U.S. campaign to force Indians from their homes on the east coast.

November: Jackson is re-elected as President of the U.S., defeating Henry Clay.

November 24: South Carolina passes the Ordinance of Nullification, which nullifies the Tariff of 1832, claiming that states have the right to nullify federal laws they deem unconstitutional. Calhoun and Jackson take opposite political sides of the nullification issue. South Carolina threatens to leave the union.

December 10: Jackson issues a proclamation denouncing nullification by South Carolina.

December 28: John C. Calhoun resigns from the office of Vice President.

1833

March 1: The United States Congress passed a compromise tariff act in response to South Carolina's objections. The state of South Carolina subsequently withdrew the Nullification Ordinance upon its approval.

March 2: Jackson signs the Force bill. The legislation authorizes the president to use armed forces to enforce federal tariff laws, the collection of import duties, to secure or close ports, etc. The bill strengthens presidential power to address the nullification crisis and is an anti-secession measure.

March 4: The second term inauguration for President Jackson, with Martin Van Buren as Vice President. Jackson's defeat of Henry Clay and the National Republicans saw an Electoral College vote of 219 to 49. Jackson also won the popular vote victory.

March 7: Compromise Tariff of 1833, negotiated by Henry Clay and others, reduces tariff rates on a gradual basis over time, appeasing dissenting southerners.

June 26: Andrew Jackson orders plans for removing federal deposits from the Second Bank of the U.S.

September 2: Oberlin College is founded. It refused to bar students on the basis of race and included the distinction of becoming the first college in the United States to offer coeducation.

September 23-26: President Jackson replaces secretary of the treasury William J. Duane, who opposes removal of the federal bank funds, with Roger B. Taney, who orders removal of the deposits. The U.S. Senate rejects Taney's nomination in June 1834.

1834

March 28: The United States Senate censures President Andrew Jackson for de-funding the Second Bank of the United States.

October 23: John Adams II dies from overconsuming alcohol at age 31.

1835

January 1: The national debt is extinguished.

January 30: An assassination attempt against Andrew Jackson by Richard Lawrence occurs outside the U.S. Capitol building. Lawrence is thwarted when his pistols misfire and the elderly president fends him off with his cane.

June 2: P.T. Barnum begins his first circus tour of the United States.

October 2: The Texas Revolution begins with the Battle of Gonzales when Mexican soldiers try to disarm the people of Gonzales, but are resisted by local militia. By November, Texas proclaimed the right to secede from Mexico with Sam Houston taking command of the Texas army. His troops would capture San Antonio on December 9.

November: The Second Seminole War begins in Florida, as the Seminole resist attempts to force them out of their land.

December 16: A fire in New York City rages, eventually destroying 530 buildings, including the New York Stock Exchange.

December 27: Andrew Jackson nominates Roger B. Taney as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

December 29: Gold had been discovered in Georgia, leading to increased pressure on Cherokee nation to move west. A group of Cherokee sign the Treaty of New Echota with the U.S. government; the treaty required the Cherokee Nation to exchange its national lands for a parcel in the "Indian Territory" (located in what is now Oklahoma) and to relocate there within two years. Another group of Cherokee, including Chief John Ross, opposed this and protested the legality of the treaty with a signed petition with over 16,000 Cherokee signatures.

The first volume of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is published.

1836

February 3: The first convention of the American Whig Party is held in Albany, New York.

February 23 - March 6: The battle for the Alamo is waged in San Antonio, Texas when 3,000 Mexican troops under Santa Ana attack the mission and its 189 defenders. Texas troops lose the battle after a thirteen day siege. On March 2, 1836, Texas declares its independence at a convention of delegates from fifty-seven Texas communities at Washington-on-the-Brazos, making them an independent nation free from Mexican rule.

February 25: The patent for the first revolver is awarded to inventor Samuel Colt.

April 21: The Battle of San Jacinto is waged with Sam Houston leading the Texas army to victory over Mexican forces. Santa Ana and his troops are taken prisoner the next day along the San Jacinto River.

May 26: The House of Representatives passes the Pinckney Resolutions; the second of these becomes known as the "gag rule", automatically tabling any petition that had to do with slavery. John Quincy Adams, who presented many of these petitions, fought viciously against the rule.

June 15: Arkansas becomes the 25th state.

June 23: Jackson signs the Surplus bill authorizing distribution of surplus federal funds to the states, a boon to Van Buren's prospects for the presidency.

July 11: Andrew Jackson issues the Specie Circular, an executive order that required payment for government land to be in gold and silver. This act would lead to the failure of the economy of land speculation and the Panic of 1837.

December 7: Martin Van Buren continues the victories for the Democratic party in the November presidential election, defeating William H. Harrison, a Whig, 170 to 73 in the Electoral College vote.

The Creek War of 1836 takes place; land speculators and squatters began to defraud Creeks out of the allotments promised to them in the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832. Some violence broke out, described by U.S. officials as a so-called "war," which they argued forfeited the Creeks' prior treaty rights. Secretary of War Lewis Cass dispatched General Winfield Scott to end the violence by forcibly removing the Creeks to the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River.

1837

January 26: Michigan became the 26th state.

March 3: Andrew Jackson recognizes the independence of Texas and nominates Alcee La Branche as Minister to Texas.

March 4: Martin Van Buren, as President, and Richard M. Johnson, as Vice President, are inaugurated.

The city of Chicago is granted a charter by Illinois.

May 10: The global economic crisis known as the Panic of 1837 begins with the failure of New York City banks and unemployment which would reach record levels.

November 7: Elijah P. Lovejoy, an abolitionist printer, is killed by a mob of slavery supporters, when he was trying to protect his shop from its third destruction.

1838

January 6: Samuel Morse, a portrait painter who later turned to invention, first publicly demonstrated the telegraph and developed the Morse Code system of communication. He would apply for a patent two years later in 1840.

June 12: The Territory of Iowa is organized.

September 3: Frederick Douglass, future abolitionist, boards a train in Maryland to freedom from slavery, with borrowed identification and a sailor's uniform from a free black seaman.

October 27: Missouri governor Lilburn Boggs issues an order for the expulsion of Mormons from the state of Missouri.

Martin Van Buren orders U.S. troops into Cherokee Nation to force their removal to Indian Territory. The forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from the Southeastern United States along the Trail of Tears led to the deaths of more than 4,000 indigenous people.

The Aroostook War, also known as the Pork and Beans War, took place; it was a military and civilian-involved confrontation in 1838–1839 between the United States and the United Kingdom over the international boundary between the British colony of New Brunswick and the U.S. state of Maine. Several British were captured; no one was killed, but two Canadian militia were injured by black bears prior to the diplomatic compromise. The conflict was resolved with the signing of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842.

1839

February 15: In Jackson, Mississippi, the first state law allowing women to own property is passed.

1840

January 19: Antarctica is claimed for the United States when Captain Charles Wilkes circumnavigates the continent and claims “Wilkes Land” for the nation.

May 7: The Great Natchez Trace Tornado strikes Natchez, Mississippi and wreaks havoc. In the second most deadly tornado in U.S. history, 317 people are counted among the dead and 209 are injured.

June 1: The census of the United States grows to 17,063,353, up 33% from the decade before. Four states now exceed one million in population; New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Virginia. The center of the nation's population continues to move slowly west, now sixteen miles south of Clarksburg, West Virginia.

December 2: President Martin Van Buren is defeated for reelection by William Henry Harrison. Harrison, a Whig, receives 234 Electoral College votes to 60 and also wins the popular vote contest.

1841

February 18: The first ongoing filibuster begins in the United States Senate during a debate on the charter of the Second National Bank and lasts until March 11. Senator Henry Clay tried to end the debate via majority vote, and Senator William R. King threatened a filibuster, saying that Clay "may make his arrangements at his boarding house for the winter." Other senators sided with King, and Clay backed down.

March 9: The Supreme Court of the U.S. states that in the case of the slave ship *Amistad* that the Africans who had wrested control of the ship had been bound into slavery illegally. The case, *United States v. Schooner Amistad*, was argued in front of the Supreme Court by John Quincy Adams. The schooner was traveling along the coast of Cuba on its way to a port for re-sale of the slaves. The African captives, who had been kidnapped in the area of Sierra Leone in West Africa and illegally sold into slavery and shipped to Cuba, escaped their shackles and took over the ship. The captives were ruled to have acted as free men when they fought to escape their kidnapping and illegal confinement. The court ruled the Africans were entitled to take whatever legal measures necessary to secure their freedom, including the use of force.

April 4: President William Henry Harrison, sworn into office only one month before on March 4, dies of pneumonia. His tenure of one month is the shortest in history and his death in office the first for a president of the United States. He is succeeded by Vice President John Tyler.

May 1: The first wagon train to California, with sixty-nine adults and several children, leave from Independence, Missouri. The journey would take until November 4.

August 16: President Tyler vetoes the bill re-establishing the Second Bank of the United States, causing an angry riot among Whig party members on White House grounds. It was the most violent demonstration on those grounds in U.S. history.

Frederick Douglass becomes an agent of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society.

1842

March 5: In a prelude four years prior to the start of the Mexican War, troops under Mexican leader Rafael Vasquez invade Texas and briefly occupy San Antonio in the first invasion since the Texas Revolution.

May 19: The People's Party of Providence, Rhode Island, founded by lawyer Thomas Wilson Dorr in 1841, wanted to liberalize the Rhode Island charter of 1663 to extend voting to those that didn't own property. The Dorr Rebellion of May 1842, with militiamen attacking an arsenal in Providence that was later repulsed, however, forced conservatives to abolish the charter and adopt a new constitution one year later.

July 10: Congressman John Botts introduces an impeachment resolution, levying several charges against John Tyler. Henry Clay tabled the resolution, favoring a more gradual impeachment process, and the resolution was defeated several months later. A House select committee headed by John Quincy Adams, an ardent abolitionist who disliked slaveholders like Tyler, condemned the president's use of a presidential veto and assailed his character. While the committee's report did not formally recommend impeachment, it clearly established the possibility, and in August 1842 the House endorsed the committee's report. Adams sponsored a constitutional amendment to change both houses' two-thirds requirement (for overriding vetoes) to a simple majority, but neither house approved.

August 9: The border between the United States and Canada is fixed east of the Rocky Mountains, including Maine and Minnesota, due to the signing of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

August 14: Second Seminole War ends.

October 20: Escaped slave George Latimer and his wife, Rebecca, were arrested in Boston, Massachusetts. Latimer's arrest led to a violent uproar from Massachusetts abolitionists, and the meetings (known as Latimer meetings) between these abolitionists resulted in the Latimer Committee's creation of two separate petitions, the "Great Massachusetts Petition" and the "Great Petition to Congress." The former requested a law banning the involvement of state officials or public property in the detention or arrest of suspected fugitives. The latter demanded that laws be passed severing any connection between Massachusetts and slavery. Latimer's freedom was purchased while these petition drives were still ongoing, but they had a considerable impact. The petition delivered to the State Assembly contained 64,526 signatures and weighed 150 pounds by the time it was delivered.

1843

February 6: At the Bowery Amphitheatre in New York City, the first minstrel show in the United States debuts.

May 22: The first major wagon train headed for the northwest via the Oregon Trail begins with one thousand pioneers from Elm Grove, Missouri.

November 28: The Kingdom of Hawaii is officially recognized by European nations as an independent nation.

1844

May 24: Samuel B. Morse, inventor of Morse code and the telegraph, sends the first message over the first telegraph line from Washington to Baltimore. His words were, "What God hath wrought."

July 3: The United States signs the Treaty of Wanghia with China. It is the first treaty signed between the two nations.

December 4: Democrat James K. Polk defeats Henry Clay for president with 170 Electoral College votes to 105 for Clay. The annexation of Texas is a hotly debated issue.

1845

January 23: Congress passed the Presidential Election Day Act, establishing the Tuesday after the first Monday in November as the day on which electors of the Electoral College are elected in all states.

March 3: The Florida Territory was admitted to the union as the state of Florida.

March 4: Democrat James K. Polk is sworn in as president in Washington, D.C..

May 1: Frederick Douglass publishes his first autobiography: *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Aboard the *Cambria*, he left the country and sought refuge in England to avoid being recaptured as a fugitive slave. He toured England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Ellen Richardson and Henry Richardson raised funds to buy Douglass' freedom from Captain Auld. They paid Auld 150 sterling pounds, about \$710, for his manumission which gave him immunity against the fugitive slave law of 1793 and 1850.

May 28: Residents of the east side of what is now Milwaukee destroy two bridges leading to the west side over the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers in what became known as the Milwaukee Bridge War.

June 8: Andrew Jackson dies at the Hermitage, at the age of 78.

July 4: The Congress of Texas votes for annexation to the United States of America with the majority of voters in Texas approving a constitution on October 13. These actions followed the signing of a bill by President Tyler on March 1, authorizing the United States to annex the Republic of Texas.

July 19: A fire in New York City kills thirty people, including four firefighters.

October 10: The United States Naval Academy is founded.

December 2: U.S. President Polk invokes the concept of Manifest Destiny, announcing to Congress that the Monroe Doctrine should be strictly enforced and that the settlement of the West should be aggressively pursued.

December 29: Polk signed into law a bill admitting the Republic of Texas into the union as the state of Texas.

1846

January 5: The United States House of Representatives changes its policy toward sharing the Oregon Territory with the United Kingdom. On June 15, the Oregon Treaty is signed with Great Britain, fixing the boundary of the United States and Canada at the 49th parallel from the Rocky Mountains to the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

May 8: The first major conflict of the Mexican-American War occurs north of the Rio Grande River at Palo Alto, Texas when United States troops under the command of Major General Zachary Taylor rout a larger Mexican force. Taylor had been ordered by President Polk to seize disputed Texas land settled by Mexicans. War is declared by the United States against Mexico on May 13, backed by southerners while northern Whigs were in opposition. Ten days later, Mexico declares war back.

June 10: The Republic of California declares independence from Mexico. Four days later, the bear flag of the Republic of California is raised at Sonoma.

August 8: Congressman David Wilmot introduces the Wilmot Proviso, as a rider on a \$2,000,000 appropriations bill intended for the final negotiations to resolve the Mexican-American War (this was only three months into the two-year war). It proposed a ban on slavery in territory acquired from Mexico in the war. The Wilmot Proviso passed the House but failed in the Senate, where the South had greater representation. It was reintroduced in February 1847 and again passed the House and failed in the Senate. In 1848, an attempt to make it part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo also failed. This Proviso was one of the major factors leading to the Civil War.

December 28: Iowa became the 29th state.

1847

March 27-29: Twelve thousand American troops under the command of General Winfield Scott take Vera Cruz, Mexico after a siege.

May 7: The American Medical Association is founded in Philadelphia.

July 1: The first adhesive postage stamps in the United States went on sale with Benjamin Franklin gracing the 5 cent stamp and George Washington fronting the 10 cent stamp.

September 8-15: The Battle for Mexico City is fought, beginning two miles outside the city at King's Mill. The main assault against the fortress Capultepec came on September 12 under the command of General Winfield Scott, with combatants including Ulysses S. Grant and John Quitman's 4th Division, of which George Pickett and James Longstreet were a part. Quitman's division entered a deserted city, which had been abandoned by Santa Anna's forces during the night on September 15.

December 22: Abraham Lincoln introduces the "Spot Resolutions" in the House of Representatives, challenging President James K. Polk to prove that the "spot" of land on which American blood had been shed (the event that prompted the United States to declare war on Mexico) had in fact been shed on American soil

Frederick Douglass raises \$2500 to publish a weekly newspaper, *The North Star*, in Rochester.

1848

January 24: Gold was discovered in California by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in the town of Colona. Seven months later, on August 19, the New York Herald breaks the news of the gold rush to East Coast readers, prompting eighty thousand prospectors to flood California and the Barbary Coast of San Francisco in 1849.

February 2: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War, with Mexico relinquishing its rights to Texas above the Rio Grande River and ceding New Mexico and California to the United States. The United States also gained claims to Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado. In exchange, the United States assumed \$3 million in American claims and paid Mexico \$15 million. The treaty is ratified one month later on March 10 by the U.S. Senate. Mexico would ratify the treaty on May 19.

February 21: John Quincy Adams suffers a stroke.

February 23: John Quincy Adams dies.

May 29: Wisconsin became the 30th state.

July 20: The Declaration of Sentiments calling for equal rights for women and men is signed by 100 men and women in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Seneca Falls, New York at the 1st Women's Rights Convention led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

November 7: Zachary Taylor, hero of the Mexican War, defeats Lewis Cass in the presidential election of 1848. Whig Taylor garners 163 Electoral College votes to 127 for the Democratic candidate. This was the first U.S. election held on the same date in every state.

1849

March 3: The United States Department of the Interior is established.

Summer: The California Gold Rush begins.

1850

January 29: Debate on the future of slavery in the territories escalates when Henry Clay introduces the Compromise of 1850 to the U.S. Congress. On March 7, Senator Daniel Webster endorses the bill as a measure to avert a possible civil war.

March 31: John C. Calhoun dies of tuberculosis in Washington, D.C.

April 19: The United States and the United Kingdom signed the Clayton–Bulwer Treaty, under which each promised to maintain the neutrality of a proposed canal through Nicaragua and not to occupy or colonize any territory in Central America.

April 19: A women's rights meeting convened at Salem, Ohio. The Convention drafted a petition on April 20 to the upcoming Ohio state constitutional convention asking that women be granted the franchise as well as civil and political rights equal to those of men.

June 1: The United States census of 1850 counts 23,191,876 population, a 35.9% increase from a decade before. Over three million people now live in its most populous state, New York.

June 3: A convention of delegates from nine slave states meets in Nashville, Tennessee. On June 10, the Convention resolved to propose the extension of the Missouri Compromise line west to the Pacific Ocean.

July 10: Millard Fillmore is sworn into office as the 13th President of the United States after the death of Zachary Taylor the day before.

July 22: Whig senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts resigns his seat following his appointment as Secretary of State.

September 9: The Compromise of 1850, pushed by Senator Henry Clay, admits California as the 31st state, without slavery, and adds Utah and New Mexico as territories with the power to decide for themselves whether slavery is permitted or forbidden.

September 18: The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 is passed, eliminating the last civil and political rights of escaped slaves and imposing serious penalties for harboring or failing to arrest fugitives.

September 20: The slave trade is abolished in Washington, D.C.

September 27: The Donation Land Claim Act is signed into law, granting free plots of land to white and half-blooded Native settlers of the Oregon Territory.

October 14: A state constitutional convention convenes in Virginia to address the disenfranchisement of the state's west.

December 10: A specially elected convention in Georgia adopted the Georgia Platform, accepting the Compromise of 1850 but warning against infringement of the rights of states in the South.

December 13: The federal government assumed Texas's debt. In exchange, Texas officially renounced its territorial claims in the New Mexico Territory.

1851

May 1: The United States of America participates in the opening ceremony of the first World's Fair in history, the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, in the Crystal Palace designed by Joseph Paxton, in Hyde Park, London, England. The world's fair becomes the first major gathering of the works of nations in one location.

September 18: The first edition of *The New York Daily Times* goes on sale (the paper later drops "Daily" from its title).

1852

June 29: American Senator Henry Clay dies.

October 24: Daniel Webster dies.

November 2: Franklin Pierce, a Democrat, wins a convincing victory for President, defeating Whig Winfield Scott by a tally of 254 to 42 electoral votes. He also garners the majority in the popular vote.

1853

July 8: Commodore Matthew C. Perry and the United States Navy arrive in Edo Bay, Japan. They would negotiate a treaty to allow U.S. ships into Japan.

July 14: U.S. President Franklin Pierce opens the first world's fair held in the United States, the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations. Located on 6th Avenue in a large palace on the site of the current New York Public Library, twenty-three foreign nations and colonies participated.

December 30: The Gadsden Purchase is consummated, with the United States buying a 29,640 square mile tract of land in present-day Arizona and New Mexico (approximately from Yuma to Las Cruces) for \$10 million from Mexico to allow railroad building in the southwest and settle continued border disputes after the Mexican-American War. This act finalized the borders of the Continental United States.

1854

February 28: In Ripon, Wisconsin, the Republican Party is founded, in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. It would hold its first convention later that year on July 6 in Jackson, Michigan.

March 31: The United States and the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan sign the Convention of Kanagawa under threat of force; it effectively meant the end of Japan's 220-year-old policy of national seclusion (sakoku) by opening the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to American vessels. It also ensured the safety of American castaways and established the position of an American consul in Japan.

May 30: The Kansas-Nebraska act becomes law, allowing the issue of slavery to be decided by a vote of settlers. This established the territories of Kansas and Nebraska and would breed much of the rancor that culminated in the actions of the next years of "Bleeding Kansas." It also nullified the Missouri Compromise.

October 18: The Ostend Manifesto, a document that described the rationale for the United States to purchase Cuba from Spain while implying that the U.S. should declare war if Spain refused, begins to circulate. During the administration of President Franklin Pierce, a pro-Southern Democrat, Southern expansionists called for acquiring Cuba as a slave state, but the outbreak of violence following the Kansas-Nebraska Act left the administration unsure of how to proceed.

1855

1856

May 21: Pro-slavery forces under Sheriff Samuel J. Jones burn the Free-State Hotel and destroy two anti-slavery newspapers and other businesses in Lawrence, Kansas, a town which had been founded by anti-slavery settlers from Massachusetts who were hoping to make Kansas a "free state". The incident, known as the Sacking of Lawrence, fuelled the irregular conflict in Kansas Territory that later became known as "Bleeding Kansas". Three days later, in reaction to the incident, John Brown and a band of abolitionist settlers—some of them members of the Pottawatomie Rifles—killed five settlers north of Pottawatomie Creek in Franklin County, Kansas.

May 22: South Carolina Congressman Preston Brooks attacks Senator Charles Sumner with a cane in the hall of the U.S. Senate after Sumner gave a speech attacking Southern sympathizers for the pro-slavery violence in Kansas. Sumner would take three years to recover while Brooks was lionized throughout Southern states.

November 4: John C. Fremont, the first candidate for president under the banner of the Republican Party, loses his bid for the presidency to James C. Buchanan, despite support for Fremont from Abraham Lincoln. Buchanan, the only bachelor to become president as well as the sole Pennsylvanian, garnered 174 Electoral College votes to 114 for Fremont. Millard Fillmore, running on the American Know-Nothing and Whig tickets was also defeated.

1857

March 4: James Buchanan is sworn into office as the 15th President of the United States. His tenure as President would be marred by the question of slavery and a compromise stance that would neither alleviate nor eradicate the intractable question from American society.

March 6: The United States Supreme Court rules in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 6-3, that a slave did not become free when transported into a free state. It also ruled that slavery could not be banned by the U.S. Congress in a territory, and that black people were not eligible to be awarded citizenship. The ruling came to be known as the Dred Scott Decision.

September: The Panic of 1857, a financial panic in the United States caused by the declining international economy and over-expansion of the domestic economy, spirals into the first worldwide economic crisis.

December 21: Two companies of the 1st Cavalry under Captain Samuel Sturgis arrive at Fort Scott, Kansas to attempt to put the disorder of "Bleeding Kansas," the slavery versus anti-slavery battle, in check.

1858

May 11: Minnesota becomes the 32nd state.

June 23: With strife between pro-slavery and anti-slavery partisans escalating to dramatic chaos, the 2nd Infantry and 3rd Artillery regiments under the command of Captain Nathaniel Lyon attempt to restore order during the "Bleeding Kansas" campaign.

August 21 - October 15: A series of seven debates between politicians Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln occur in Illinois.

1859

February 14: Oregon is admitted to the Union as the 33rd state.

October 16: The United States Armory at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia) is seized by twenty-one men under the leadership of abolitionist John Brown. This attempt to cause an uprising of slaves in the surrounding territories fails when federal troops on October 18, under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, kill several of the raiders and capture John Brown.

December 2: John Brown is hanged for treason by the state of Virginia due to his leadership role in the raid on the Harper's Ferry armory and failed attempt to spur revolt among Virginia slaves.

1860

April 3: The Pony Express begins. Overland mail between Sacramento, California and St. Joseph's, Missouri is carried over the Oregon Trail for eighteen months by this series of riders on horseback, then rendered obsolete when the transcontinental telegraph is completed.

November 6: Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln, running on an anti-slavery platform, defeats three opponents in the campaign for the presidency; Democrats Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, and John Bell, Constitutional Union Party, leading to ardent cries of potential rebellion in southern slave states. Although Lincoln won the Electoral College by a large majority, 180 to 123 for all other candidates, the popular vote showed just how split the nation was. Lincoln garnered 1.9 million votes to the 2.8 million spread amongst his opponents.

October 15: Eleven-year-old Grace Bedell of New York suggested in a letter that Abraham Lincoln grow "whiskers" to improve the appearance of his thin face.

December 18: Senator John J. Crittenden introduces an unsuccessful proposal that aimed to resolve the secession crisis, referred to as the Crittenden Compromise. It guaranteed the permanent existence of slavery in the slave states and addressed Southern demands in regard to fugitive slaves and slavery in the District of Columbia. It proposed reinstating the Missouri Compromise (which had been functionally repealed in 1854 by the Kansas–Nebraska Act, and struck down entirely in 1857 by the Dred Scott decision), and extending the compromise line to the west, with slavery prohibited north of the 36° 30' parallel and guaranteed south of it. The compromise included a clause that it could not be repealed or amended. The proposal was tabled on December 31 due to the Republicans, who said the compromise "would amount to a perpetual covenant of war against every people, tribe, and state owning a foot of land between here and Tierra del Fuego."

December 20: South Carolina responds to the election of Abraham Lincoln as President by becoming the first southern state to secede from the Union.

1861

January 29: Kansas becomes the 34th state.

February 4: In Montgomery, Alabama, the convention to form the Confederate States of America opens. Four days later, with Jefferson Davis as president, seven southern states officially set up the C.S.A.

March 4: Abraham Lincoln is sworn in as president of the United States with Hannibal Hamlin as Vice President.

April 12 - 14: Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina harbor is bombarded for 34 hours by Confederate forces after the U.S. Army commander failed to evacuate, thus starting the four years of conflict in the U.S. Civil War. The Confederate States of America, formed two months

earlier had sought to force federal troops from occupation of its territory. Fort Sumter was captured April 14 when Major Robert Anderson turned the fort over to the Confederacy.

April 15: President Lincoln calls for 75,000 volunteers to fight the secessionist activities in the Confederated States of America, which rose to eleven southern states in secession by May.

July 21: The first Battle of Bull Run at Manassas, Virginia occurs with the repulsion of Union forces by the Confederacy.

1862

May 20: The Homestead Act is approved, granting family farms of 160 acres (65 hectares) to settlers, many of which were carved from Indian territories. Two months later, on July 7, the Land Grant Act was approved, which called for public land sale to fund agricultural education. This act eventually led to the establishment of the state university systems.

September 17: Emboldened by the victory at 2nd Manassas at the end of August, Confederate troops began the 1st invasion of Northern territory. Begun with a skirmish the night before north of Sharpsburg, Maryland, the day of September 17 along Antietam Creek burns bright as the bloodiest day of the Civil War. Along the Bloody Lane of the Sunken Road, around the Dunker Church, on the bluffs above Burnside Bridge, and in the ripped stalks of the cornfield, Union and Confederate troops fell in astounding numbers.

September 22: President Abraham Lincoln, fresh on the heels of the Antietam victory, issues the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, stating that all slaves in places of rebellion against the Federal Government would be free as of January 1, 1863.

December 26: Throughout the late 1850s in the lead-up to the war, treaty violations by the United States and late or unfair annuity payments by Indian agents caused increasing hunger and hardship among the Dakota. Armed conflict began between the Dakota and the United States in August 1862 and culminated on December 26 in the jailing of over one thousand Dakota Sioux, and the hanging of thirty-eight in Mankato. It was the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

1863

January 1: Daniel Freeman files one of the first homestead applications at the Brownsville Land Office in Nebraska, cementing the Homestead Act of 1862 on its first day of implementation. The Emancipation Proclamation goes into effect.

June 20: Pro-Union counties that had seceded from Virginia became the 35th state, West Virginia.

July 1-3: After three days of battle surrounding the tiny town of Gettysburg , including over 150,000 troops, Union defenders of Cemetery Ridge turn back General Pickett and Pettigrew during Pickett's Charge. With over 51,000 dead, wounded, or missing, the Battle of Gettysburg, on the farm fields of central Pennsylvania, proved to be the "high water mark of the Confederacy" and the last major push of Confederate forces into Union territory.

July 4: The city of Vicksburg surrenders to General Grant after a two month siege. The Vicksburg campaign included major battles from May 19, including the sinking of gunboats on the Mississippi River by Confederate defenders. This major accomplishment in the western theatre, plus the actions of Meade at Gettysburg one day earlier with the repulse of Pickett's Charge, prove to be the two most important victories of the Civil War.

November 19: Abraham Lincoln delivers the Gettysburg Address.

Additional Resources

Podcasts:

[Presidential!](#)

Produced by the *Washington Post*, this podcast features one President per episode, delving into each American President's history and legacy.

Recommended episodes: John Quincy Adams; George Washington; John Adams; James Monroe; Andrew Jackson; William Henry Harrison

[The Dollop](#)

A comedy podcast that takes a deep dive into lesser-known pieces of history, hosted by Dave Anthony and Gareth Reynolds (note – contains swearing).

Recommended episodes: The Jackson Cheese; The Know-Nothing Party; James Callender; James Oglethorpe and the Colony of Georgia

[The Wilderness](#)

Hosted by Jon Favreau, this 15 episode series discusses the history of the Democratic Party and the party's role in modern politics.

Recommended episodes: Chapter 1 – The Democracy; Chapter 15 – The Story

Books:

Democracy for Realists by Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels

A social science-focused analysis of the reasons people vote for a given party or candidate, and the factors that affect voters' choices. Achen and Bartels argue that democratic theory needs to be founded on identity groups and political parties, not on the preferences of individual voters.

The Lost Founding Father by William J. Cooper

A biography of John Quincy Adams that examines his role as a “lost” founding father, someone who linked the founding generation to the next era of America politics and did incredible, but not often recognized, things for his country.

Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic by Charles N. Edel

A biography of John Quincy Adams that focuses on his relationship to foreign policy in particular, rooted in JQA's famous fourth of July speech in which he states that “America goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy”. Edel argues that Adams was the central architect of a strategy that shaped America's rise, focusing on insulation from conflict in Europe, expansion of U.S. territory, and the development of domestic infrastructure and commerce.

The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels by Jon Meacham

An examination and analysis of the current political moment through the lens of American history.

Articles:

[“The Revival of John Quincy Adams”](#) by David Waldstreicher (*The Atlantic*, 2017)

An analysis of a sudden re-emergence of interest in John Quincy Adams and his role in shaping American history.