

# Station 1: Development of the Two-party System

## Hamiltonians vs. Jeffersonians

After the new United States Congress completed its first task of creating a Bill of Rights, it turned its attention to the issue of financing the new government. President George Washington appointed Alexander Hamilton as the Treasury Secretary, and Hamilton took it upon himself to develop an economic structure for the United States that would give the public confidence in the government's financial affairs.

As he formulated his plan, Hamilton used a loose interpretation of the Constitution, believing that what the Constitution did not specifically forbid, it allowed. He also believed that a strong central government was critical to encourage commerce and industry and to prevent chaos within America's borders. This perspective shaped his fiscal plan.

Hamilton's proposal, titled "The First Report on the Public Credit," declared that the federal government would assume the debts of the individual states. Each of the thirteen states had amassed significant debt as they fought for freedom from Britain. Hamilton believed that assuming these debts would not only give the public confidence in the federal government, but would also emotionally bind them to the government out of a sense of loyalty and gratitude. Adopting the states' debts would cost the federal government around \$21.5 million, an awesome sum at that time. Several southern states had already paid off their debts and would receive no direct benefit from the assumption of debts, so Hamilton's plan offered to put a new national capital in the south. This capital would eventually become Washington, D.C.

The second element of Hamilton's plan was to assume the Confederation's debts at par, which meant that interest would be included when the debt was paid—a monstrous sum of more than \$54 million. Hamilton wanted to assume the states' and the Confederation's debts because he felt a national debt would give the citizens unity and a sense of respect for the government.

A third key element in Hamilton's financial strategy was to establish a national bank. Hamilton modeled his national bank after the Bank of England, which provided a strong federal institution that printed and circulated paper money, while giving the government a repository for excess funds. Hamilton believed that a national bank was necessary to implement the Constitution's decree that the government collect taxes, pay debts, and regulate trade. Hamilton felt that this need fulfilled the Constitutional clause that stated what was "necessary and proper" could be accomplished by the government. This clause was also known as the "elastic clause."

Although Hamilton was considered a financial wizard and many trusted him to finance the new government, he was not without opposition. His most outspoken critic was Thomas Jefferson, who was serving in President Washington's Cabinet as Secretary of State. Jefferson strictly interpreted the Constitution and believed in a decentralized government that should exist primarily to protect man's natural rights to life, liberty, and property.

In contrast to Hamilton's proposal, Jefferson felt that the states should hold greater authority than the federal government, since the states were closer to the people and were less likely to abuse their authority. Furthermore, his strict interpretation of the Constitution—believing that what was not specifically written was forbidden—led him to believe that Hamilton's proposal of a national bank exceeded federal authority.

Both Jefferson's and Hamilton's political views represented public opinion. What began as a personal dispute between the two men evolved into the formation of primitive political parties. Jeffersonians shared the belief in a strict interpretation of the Constitution, while Hamiltonians accepted a broad interpretation.

President George Washington, however, remained safely neutral in the dispute between his two staff members. He asked Hamilton and Jefferson to prepare arguments regarding Hamilton's proposed U.S. bank based on their differing interpretations of the Constitution. After hearing both arguments, Congress and Washington favored Hamilton's plan, and the Bank of the United States became a reality in 1791.

By this time, Hamilton had already developed several duties and excise taxes that the new national bank could collect. Congress had passed a Hamilton-recommended tariff of around eight percent on dutiable imports in 1789 and a

domestic excise tax—a tax levied on the manufacture, sale, or consumption of goods—in 1791. An unforeseen result of this tax was the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. Hamilton included whiskey, a commodity produced primarily by western farmers, in his tax. The plan levied a seven cent per gallon tax on whiskey, much to the dismay of distillers. For people in the backcountry, whiskey was not a luxury but a trade necessity and a form of currency; even preachers were paid with distilled whiskey.

Seeing their livelihood threatened by Hamilton’s excise tax, the whiskey producers rebelled. Peaceful protests eventually turned violent with the distillers tarring and feathering revenue collectors. When President Washington heard about the rebellion, Hamilton urged him to take action and he sent an army of over thirteen thousand men to end the uprising.

When the soldiers arrived in the backcountry of Western Pennsylvania, they were surprised to learn that the “rebellion” had been drastically blown out of proportion. The angry distillers were overwhelmed and quickly dispersed, and only three lives were lost in this battle. Public perception of this event was divided, and this division strengthened the emerging political parties. Hamiltonians—known also as Federalists—supported Hamilton’s financial plans and Washington’s actions to stop the Whiskey Rebellion, while Jeffersonians, who were becoming known as the Democratic-Republicans, argued that the government had used excessive and unnecessary force.

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## **Station 2: Development of the Two-party System**

### **Federalists and Democratic-Republicans**

With the two-party system of government in its founding stages in the United States, a continent away events were taking place that would further the evolution of the Federalist and the Democratic-Republican parties. The people of France were taking their cues from the American Revolution and rebelling against the authoritarian leadership of King Louis XVI. As war ensued between France and

Great Britain in 1793, conflict arose in America as the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans disagreed on where to place their loyalties.

According to the Franco-American Alliance of 1778, the United States was bound to aid France whenever called upon. But at the time of the Alliance, no one could foresee that France would become embroiled in conflict against Britain and that the United States might be called upon to repel British forces from French lands. The emerging American political parties took opposite sides on the issue. The Democratic-Republicans wanted to demonstrate loyalty to the French, who had helped them claim their own liberty, although Jefferson only wanted to lend moral support. He did not believe that the French would call upon the United States to uphold their end of the treaty. Conversely, the Federalists, under Hamilton's leadership, implored President Washington to declare the 1778 treaty suspended. Hamilton's primary goal was to maintain a peaceful relationship with Britain to ensure continued trade to support the American economy.

George Washington's response was an action of inaction. He issued the Neutrality Proclamation in 1793, which declared the United States neutral between Britain and France and strongly urged people to avoid any alliance with either camp. The Democratic-Republicans were outraged, not only by the declaration itself, but by Washington's failure to consult Congress before issuing the proclamation. The Federalists, for the most part, were pleased.

Citizen Edmond Genêt, a French representative to the United States, set out to take advantage of the conflict. Upon meeting with Democratic-Republicans, he came to believe that the Neutrality Proclamation was more a governmental display of excess authority than a reflection of the public's desire. He began to recruit unauthorized American armies to overtake Spanish Florida and Louisiana, along with parts of British Canada, in support of the Franco-American Alliance. Genêt even threatened to overthrow Washington himself. However, Washington prevailed by demanding and receiving Genêt's withdrawal from the United States and replacement with a more rational French representative.

The Democratic-Republicans perpetually found themselves at odds with the Federalists as the British continued to battle with France. Britain ignored Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality, assumed America was allied with France, and seized ships in the West Indies and captured many American sailors. Although both the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans were outraged, they had very different opinions about how America should respond. Under

Hamilton's leadership, the Federalists were most concerned with the economy and wanted to avoid war at all costs. In contrast, the Democratic-Republicans following Jefferson's leadership felt America was obligated to again fight Britain for its liberty.

Washington stepped in to contain the situation. He sent Federalist Chief Justice John Jay to London in 1794 to negotiate a treaty with Britain to maintain trade relations and avoid war. Yet again the Democratic-Republicans were unhappy with Washington's actions, fearing that Jay, who was notoriously pro-British, would betray his own country.

Meanwhile Hamilton, fearful of war and ensuing economic disaster, sabotaged Jay's negotiations by sharing U.S. negotiation tactics with the British. Not surprisingly, Jay's negotiations were ineffective, garnering only minor victories for the United States. Jay's Treaty gave the British 18 months to withdraw from the western forts, although they were given the right to continue fur trade with the Indians. The treaty also called for America to repay debts incurred to England during the Revolutionary War. Although there was public outcry over this treaty, the Senate passed the treaty in 1795.

The Democratic-Republicans raged, while the effects of Jay's Treaty rippled across the United States and beyond. Spain, fearing that the treaty indicated burgeoning loyalties between the U.S. and England, moved to gain a foothold by establishing its own alliance with America. In Pinckney's Treaty of 1795, the Spanish granted almost all the United States' requests, including ownership of the previously disputed territory north of Florida. This treaty also gave American western farmers and traders the right of deposit at New Orleans.

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## **Development of the Two-party System**

### **Station 3: Washington's Farewell Address**

By 1796, President George Washington had served two consecutive four-year terms in office. The ongoing battle between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans contributed to his decision to retire following his second term.

Washington delivered his Farewell Address via newspapers. In this communication, he conveyed his concerns regarding alliances—both international and domestic. Washington felt that no alliance should be permanent, but rather limited to “extraordinary emergencies” and then only temporary.

He encouraged citizens to examine their loyalty to the United States, rather than to individual political parties, believing that the divisive nature of political parties would bring more harm than good to the union. He even warned against a general spirit of innovation which he felt could weaken the foundation set forth in the Constitution.

Washington’s text was met in much the same way as many of his proclamations while in office: with partisan conflict. His supporters lauded his service and dedication to building a solid, strong government, while his detractors picked apart his shortcomings and inequities. However, both sides agreed that Washington had served the purpose of being a prominent figurehead for a union struggling to find its footing, and that his successor could be chosen with more focus on political prowess than prestige.

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## Excerpts from George Washington’s Farewell Address

George Washington, 1796

Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which finds a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true; and in governments of a monarchical cast, patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositaries, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be

corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit, which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule, indeed, extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

## **Station 4: John Adams**

### **Election of 1800**

As the presidential election of 1800 drew near, political maneuvering grew increasingly aggressive. The election was the first to feature the Federalists and Republicans as two national political parties. Federalists endured the wrath of angry Americans who viewed the Federalists as power-hungry bureaucrats with



anti-liberty agendas. The Alien and Sedition Acts, coupled with large tax increases--which required a small army of administrators to enforce--cast a dark cloud over the party. Fear grew throughout the states as Federal soldiers pursued private citizens for opposing government policies and protesting high taxes. Many Republicans, mostly from southern states, secretly planned to resist Federalist tyranny by force or secede from the union if the Federalists remained in power.

Federalists defended their political strategy and attempted to deflect the voters' ire onto the Republican Party. They portrayed Jefferson as a godless extremist who would destroy religion, introduce immorality to society, and institute radical social reforms similar to those found in France. Federalist Alexander Hamilton thought the country should be ruled by the best people, not by the masses as Republicans believed. Hamilton worried that a full democracy would let inexperienced, easy-to-influence commoners run the country.

Those who shared most of Hamilton's political opinions, called Hamiltonian Federalists, promoted a strong central government and limited rights for states. They supported private enterprise and believed government should protect the lives and wealth of affluent citizens. The pro-British Federalists, many of whom continued to embrace Loyalist sentiments, favored trade agreements with England. Hamilton and his followers also counted on a Federalist presidential victory because of the impending war with France. Citizens of America, he reasoned, would get swept up in waves of patriotism and support the Federalist candidates. However, President Adams was still the most visible Federalist, and his political opinions clashed with those of Hamilton. Adams broke from his party's platform to negotiate with France. His decision to bypass war and seek peace divided the Federalist Party and most likely cost him the chance of re-election.

Members of both parties used newspapers, pamphlets, and town hall meetings to deride their opponents, although only Republicans were convicted under the Sedition Act. The behavior was standard for eighteenth-century politics, but Thomas Jefferson refused to participate in the mudslinging. Jefferson instead took his campaign to the farmers, laborers, and shopkeepers. He appealed to the common people because he sympathized with those who were oppressed and persecuted. In 1800 he wrote, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

The "commoners" Jefferson spoke of were educated white males who owned property. The illiterate and landless, he believed, could not self-govern. Many of

the Virginian's followers lived in the southern states where agriculture was the principal means of support. He championed their pleas to maintain slaveholding because he understood the importance of the black slave system to the success of the tobacco and rice farmers. Although he faced a moral issue with slavery, Jefferson realized his presidential campaign needed the support of the farmers, and it was in his best interest to help them prosper.

Jefferson also garnered support from those seeking relief from an overbearing government. The Republican Party advocated a weak central government with individual states holding the most power. By placing authority on the local level, Jefferson argued, citizens could keep a watchful eye on their representatives and avoid the potential creation of a dictatorship.

The election of 1800 included Republicans Jefferson and Aaron Burr and Federalists Adams and Charles C. Pinckney as candidates for president and vice president, respectively. The Republican effort to motivate voters paid off, as more than twice the number of people turned out for the 1800 election than for earlier elections. Jefferson collected 73 electoral votes to Adams's 65; however, the presidency was not yet won. Burr also received 73 votes, tying him with Jefferson. At the time, candidates for president and vice president did not run on the same ticket. Rather, the person who received the most votes was named president.

The Federalists agreed to have an elector offer one vote for John Jay so that Adams would have more votes than Pinckney. Republicans, however, made no such plan and wound up with their candidates finishing in a dead heat. Since Burr refused to step aside, the decision to elect the next president was to be made by the House of Representatives, which was controlled by the Federalists.

Burr became the favorite because many Federalists believed Jefferson would dismantle Hamilton's fiscal system and change the Washington-Adams foreign policy. The debates stretched into 1801 before Hamilton, who detested Burr, persuaded enough of his fellow party members to give Jefferson the victory. Burr was named vice president. Jefferson, who compared his victory to the historic events of 1776, called the election the "Revolution of 1800." He may have been right in this respect since this election produced the first orderly transfer of power from one party to another.

Soon after the election, the Twelfth Amendment was created to guarantee that a voting deadlock would never occur again. It required separate balloting in the

Electoral College for president and vice president. The amendment was ratified in 1804 before the next election.

The Republican victory of 1800 was the beginning of the end of the Federalist Party. For more than a decade, Federalists had held the most powerful positions in the United States government. With the defeat, John Adams became the last Federalist president. The party slowly lost its political clout and dissolved by 1830.

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## **Station 5: Jefferson as President**

### **The Louisiana Purchase**

After the malicious campaigning of the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson focused on reconciling the colonies and restoring the principles of the Revolution of 1776. “We have called by different names brethren of the same principle,” he declared in his first inaugural address. “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.” The tall and lanky politician was, in many ways, the opposite of his short and rotund predecessor.

Unlike Federalist leaders who supported big business, big cities, and big government, Jefferson believed in an agrarian society with strong local governments. Farming, he believed, was a noble profession because it kept men away from the temptation of the cities and required an honest day’s work. He also favored a more informal style of government than the pomp and ceremony so conspicuous in the Washington and Adams administrations.

While Jefferson formulated his strategy to downsize the federal government and stimulate the country’s economy, Napoleon Bonaparte set in motion his plan to revive French imperialism in the New World. Spain’s agreement to give Louisiana back to France jeopardized Pinckney’s Treaty, which provided Americans free navigation of the Mississippi River. Jefferson feared that the power-hungry Napoleon had designs on controlling the American frontier and would forbid Americans access to New Orleans, the most important shipping port in the south. The prospect of losing rights to the Mississippi River and New Orleans endangered plans for western expansion and threatened the American economy.

In 1802, Jefferson ordered Robert Livingston, minister to France, and later James Monroe to visit Paris to negotiate the purchase of New Orleans and Florida. Jefferson did not know if Spain had also relinquished control of Florida to France, but he realized that the two territories were crucial to America's success. The president, a pacifist who reduced the size of the American military, aggressively warned that if France took possession of New Orleans, the United States citizens would be forced to rely on the British military to help them win access to the waterway.

However, by 1803, the French army had suffered a humiliating defeat during a slave revolt in Saint Domingue—present day Haiti—and Napoleon's plans to conquer Europe demanded more men, money, and weaponry than anticipated. These events forced the French ruler to alter plans to expand the French empire into America. Napoleon was no longer concerned with developing sugar plantations in the New World—he needed troops for European battles and money to support his conquest. Napoleon withdrew his soldiers from America and the surrounding islands and ordered Talleyrand to offer all of Louisiana to the Americans.

Livingston and Monroe were authorized to buy New Orleans and Florida for no more than \$10 million, but they never dreamed they would have the opportunity to purchase more than 800,000 square miles. Since Napoleon demanded an immediate response, there was no time to send for Jefferson's approval. The men negotiated with the French representatives and, in the spring of 1803, the United States government agreed to buy all of the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million. The purchase more than doubled the size of the United States, but neither party knew the exact size of the territory or what it contained. "I can give you no direction," said Talleyrand. "You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and, I suppose you will make the most of it."

The deal garnered support from many Americans who were excited over the prospect of further westward expansion. Critics of the agreement, however, refused to remain silent. Many Federalists attacked Jefferson for undermining the Constitution, which did not mention the purchase of territory. Even Jefferson questioned whether the government had the power under the Constitution to add territory and grant American citizenship to the approximately 50,000 people living in the Louisiana Territory. Jefferson and Congress finally agreed to overlook the constitutional difficulties for the good sense of the country. The president had

compromised his belief of a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Although several prominent Federalists—including John Adams and John Marshall—favored the purchase, others in the party viewed the new land as a threat to their future. Some Federalists feared that an expanded United States would dilute their New England-based political power. They reasoned that the Louisiana inhabitants, including Indians, blacks, and commoners, would be more attracted to the Republican Party values that promoted class equality and extolled the virtues of agrarian life.

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## **Station 6: Jefferson as President**

### **Lewis and Clark**

The Louisiana Purchase offered the United States much needed room to grow and access to an abundance of natural resources, waterways, and fertile farmland. Countless opportunities awaited the Americans, but they would first have to locate them. The Louisiana Territory was so large that France could not accurately define its contents or borders. Jefferson took advantage of the ambiguous agreement and asserted that it included the Missouri River, western Florida, New Orleans, and all of present-day Texas.

To evaluate the purchase, Jefferson planned an expedition. As a scientist, he wanted to know about the plants, animals, geographical layout, and inhabitants of the region. More importantly, however, the president was hoping to find a water route to connect the Mississippi River with the Pacific Ocean, and he expanded the expedition to investigate regions beyond Louisiana.

In 1803, Jefferson secured \$2,500 from Congress to fund the journey. He then appointed his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to lead the expedition. To serve as joint commander, Lewis selected William Clark, a veteran army officer with considerable experience as a surveyor, mapmaker, frontiersman, and Indian negotiator. The duo assembled a team of 48 qualified men, called the “Corps of Discovery,” to accompany them on the trip. The members were chosen for their expertise, strength, and character. During the spring of 1804, the group departed from St. Louis and traveled northwest along the Missouri River toward the Pacific

Ocean.

Along the way, Lewis and Clark recruited additional help. Among those added were a French trapper named Toussaint Charbonneau and his 16-year-old Shoshone wife Sacajawea who served as guides and interpreters for the journey. Clark believed that having an Indian woman as a member of their party would show that their intentions were peaceful. Just weeks before the group departed from the upper Missouri, Sacajawea gave birth to her first son. The new Indian mother carried her baby boy on a cradleboard as the group continued its trek.

Four months later, the Corps of Discovery encountered a Shoshone band. When Sacajawea advanced to negotiate the purchase of horses for their leg over the Rocky Mountains, she discovered that it was her brother who led the Shoshone tribe. Sacajawea had been kidnapped at the age of ten and lost touch with her people. Although the reunion with her family was emotional, she remained loyal to the expedition.

Lewis and Clark valued Sacajawea as a guide. Clark wrote in his journal how she remembered Shoshone trails from her childhood and led them along an important trail that passed through a gap in the mountains to the Yellowstone River. The expedition leaders respected Sacajawea for the courage and strength she displayed and formed a strong bond with her son.

In the fall of 1805, the Corps of Discovery crossed the Continental Divide and descended the Snake and Columbia Rivers to the Pacific Ocean. The group marveled at the scenery they believed marked their western destination.

"Great joy in camp we are in View of the Ocean, this great Pacific Ocean which we been So long anxious to See. And the roaring or noise made by the waves breaking on the rocky Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distinctly."--William Clark, November 7, 1805

However, Clark's journal entry was premature: The group was actually at the Columbia estuary. It would be another two weeks before they would reach Cape Disappointment and look out over the Pacific Ocean. The group constructed Fort Clatsop and suffered through a cold, wet winter. In March, they started their trek home and separated into two parties to explore more land. The two groups rejoined each other at the juncture of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and arrived back in St. Louis in September of 1806.

The Corps of Discovery finally completed the mission that Thomas Jefferson assigned to them nearly three years earlier. The group recorded more than 100 animals and nearly 200 plants new to American science. They traveled thousands of miles over various terrains and created approximately 150 maps. The expedition established friendly relations with Indians and identified strategic locations for trading posts. However, the group did not find the item Jefferson most wanted—a water passage connecting the Mississippi River with the Pacific Ocean.

Between 1806 and 1807, Jefferson continued to gather information about the territory west of the Mississippi River. He sent Lieutenant Zebulon Pike to find the source of the Mississippi and to explore the Colorado region. Although he did not keep detailed notes like Lewis and Clark, Pike's excursion offered Americans valuable information regarding the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains.

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## **Station 7: Jefferson as President**

### **Marbury v. Madison**

John Marshall was a lifelong Federalist dedicated to strengthening the power of the Federal government. He was appointed by John Adams during the last days of his presidency. The Judiciary Act of 1801, one of the final laws passed by Adams and the Federalist-controlled Congress, created sixteen new federal judgeships and other judicial offices. The appointment of these “midnight judges” enraged Republicans who claimed the action defied the will of the people who had voted the Federalists out of office.

The Republican-dominated Congress fought back by repealing the Judiciary Act of 1801. When Secretary of State James Madison refused to deliver a commission to William Marbury, one of Adams's midnight appointees, Marbury sued for its delivery. The future of the Federalist Party in Washington seemed bleak. However, the case of *Marbury v. Madison* went to the Supreme Court, which was led by John Marshall, the Federalists' most powerful member and Jefferson's distant cousin.

The Court's unanimous opinion, which was written by Chief Justice Marshall, stated that Marbury deserved his commission, but the Court had no jurisdiction in

the case. Marshall then ruled that part of the Judiciary Act of 1789, which dealt with the authority of the Supreme Court, was unconstitutional. With his decision, Marshall answered the controversial question regarding who had the authority to determine the meaning of the Constitution. Marshall created the precedent of judicial review, empowering the Supreme Court to rule a federal law unconstitutional and impose its will on the states.

Marshall's decision prompted Jefferson to strike back. The president, who let many of Adams's midnight appointments stand, sought the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase. Republicans were appalled by Chase's vindictive partisanship and wanted nothing more than to relieve him of his authority. In 1804, the House of Representatives indicted Chase on "high crimes and misdemeanors." The impeachment proceedings then moved to the Senate to determine guilt or innocence. The Senate failed to generate enough votes to convict and remove Chase from his post. In the end, it was found that Chase's only crime was his inability to control his temper and his big mouth, and neither was a violation of law.

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## **Station 8: War of 1812**

### **The War**

While Republicans, for the most part, still backed Jefferson's foreign policies, new elections were transforming the party. Older politicians who molded the Republican Party policy and put Jefferson and Madison in power were replaced by daring young go-getters, such as Henry Clay of Kentucky, who were intent on defending America's honor. These new leaders, called "War Hawks" by their Federalist opponents, were the primary force behind Madison's decision to call for war with Britain.

The War Hawks, who were interested in expansion westward and into Canada, were angry at British leaders for closing trade channels with America and considered Britain's treatment of American sailors illegal. They believed retaliation was necessary to gain respect from European leaders. In 1812, the United States entered into war with only a fraction of the manpower and weapons



that Britain claimed.

To lead the Americans into battle, Madison relied on several veterans who served in the Revolution. However, these soldiers were now much older and far removed from battlefield experience. They lacked the training and discipline necessary to undertake a military campaign. An attempt to invade Canada failed when a large number of British troops, and a group led by Indian chief Tecumseh, overwhelmed American forces that were spread too thin.

As the war waged on, the American military became hardened by the experience of battle. In the fall of 1813, a fleet led by Captain Oliver Hazard Perry defeated British forces that controlled Lake Erie. As English troops retreated from Detroit, William Henry Harrison gave chase and defeated them at the Thames River. The battle was a turning point for the Americans because among the dead was Chief Tecumseh. Without their powerful leader, the Indians lost their will to fight, and the British military was forced to reconsider its strategy.

During the spring of 1814, British leaders launched a plan to end the war once and for all. An army of 11,000 men marched southward from Montreal while another group sailed from Jamaica to New Orleans to control the waterways. When the British troops reached Washington, they encountered little resistance and set the Capitol and the White House on fire. President Madison watched helplessly as Redcoats took souvenirs before the blaze grew out of control.

The group then moved on to Fort McHenry, where they fired more than 1,800 shells in just over 24 hours. Witnessing the continuous bombing was Francis Scott Key. Just before the attack, Key had sneaked on board a British ship in search of a captured doctor. Key kept his eyes on Fort McHenry, and on the American flag that flew over the fort, as rockets lit up the night sky. When daylight arrived, Key peaked out from his cover to see the Stars and Stripes still waving. The Americans had successfully defended their ground. Moved by the scene, Key scribbled his thoughts on the back of an old letter. Eventually, the notes became "The Star Spangled Banner," a song the United States would adopt as its national anthem.

Later that year, the British planned another attempt to overtake New Orleans. An armada of 60 ships and 11,000 men, led by Major General Sir Edward Pakenham, set out from Jamaica to the mouth of the Mississippi. As the fleet sailed through swamps and bayous before approaching the city from the east, American farmers saw the ships and raced to inform General Andrew Jackson, who was in charge of

defending the Gulf Coast. Jackson quickly rallied his troops and ambushed the British fleet. The battle raged for weeks before Pakenham ordered his soldiers to advance on the Americans who had dug in just outside New Orleans. The American army, which consisted of soldiers, sailors, pirates, militiamen, and freed slaves, used a strategy of revolving firing lines to make sure that guns were always firing at the Redcoats. The British army was forced to retreat after it suffered more than 300 fatalities, including Major General Pakenham. The Battle of New Orleans was an overwhelming success for the Americans and made General Andrew Jackson a hero.

While fighting occurred across the United States, many defiant Federalists continued to protest against the war. Some extremists participated in illegal trade with British troops stationed in Canada; others went even further. The Hartford Convention was the meeting of radical New England Federalists who considered seceding from the Union. Some members proposed the creation of a New England Confederacy that would establish peace with England so trading could be reinstated. As the group planned its strategy to strike against the Republican-led Union, the leaders received news about a peaceful resolution to the war. Rumors about the plan to secede from the Union spread throughout the states, and Federalist support declined drastically.

In 1814, during the same time that England carried out its plan to defeat General Jackson and take control of New Orleans, an American delegation met with English representatives in the small Belgian city of Ghent to discuss the possibility for peace. Members of the American group included former secretary of the treasury Albert Gallatin; Speaker of the House of Representatives Henry Clay; former senator James Bayard; Jonathan Russell, minister to Sweden; and John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams and minister to Russia.

Confident that their army would be victorious, the British made several heavy-handed demands. For example, Britain wanted the United States to give nearly all of the Northwest Territory to the Indians and relinquish control of the Great Lakes and portions of Maine, but the Americans refused. After several days of negotiating, the British envoys received word of several defeats the English army had suffered in the United States and reconsidered their bargaining position.

The Treaty of Ghent, signed on Christmas Eve in 1814, was essentially a draw. It called for both the British and Americans to quit fighting and return conquered territory. It made no reference to the complaints that prompted the United States to

declare war on Britain. Search and seizures, Orders in Council, and the impressment of American sailors were basically ignored, and both parties were content to agree to a truce. After the treaty was signed, ships were free to sail to any port, goods could be traded with any customer, and Royal Navy warships no longer patrolled the American coastline.

The War of 1812 began and ended on an ironic note. It began while American and British diplomats were on the verge of reaching accord, and its peace treaty was signed before America's great victory at New Orleans had been fought. Even more ironic was the fact that the most meaningful consequence of this divisive conflict was an upsurge of nationalism that united Americans and led to the development of a national identity and agenda in the postwar years.

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