Chapter 9: An Empire for Liberty, 1790–1824

Chapter Review

1. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES Expansion Touches Mandan Villages on the Upper Missouri

The Mandans had lived along the Missouri River since the fourteenth century. The eighteenth century had been the golden age for these people, who numbered approximately 3,000 in 1804. Matrilineal clans were the main institution of their communities. On their journey to survey the west for President Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark spent the winter with the Mandans. Information provided by the Mandans and other Indian peoples in the west proved invaluable to the explorers. Lewis and Clark had been sent to survey the territory of the Louisiana Purchase as part of President Jefferson’s vision of an expanding agrarian nation.

1. NORTH AMERICAN COMMUNITIES FROM COAST TO COAST

The United States entered the nineteenth century full of national pride. However, the United States’ place in the world, and the North American continent, was still uncertain.

a. The Former American Colonies

The Atlantic port cities, although they only contained three percent of the nation’s population, continued to dominate the nation’s economy. In 1800 the nation’s most important cities were all sea ports. Although the sea ports were important, Americans looked westward towards open expanses and the opportunity for more land. From 1800 to 1850 Americans spread west all the way to the Pacific.

b. Northern Neighbors: British North America and Russian America

Britain kept a tight grip on British North America despite its loss of the American colonies in the Revolutionary War. This region of British North America dominated the continental fur trade and controlled several vital waterways including the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. British control of this area was an impediment and frustration to westward moving Americans. Further north, Russia held the territory known as Alaska and the Bering Straight. Russians used Alaska for its fur resources, which often led to disputes with the native population.

c. The Spanish Empire

Spain, in possession of territories in both North and South American posed a potential threat to the United States. The Spanish sought to protect their territories, especially the silver rich territory or Mexico, from American encroachment. Spain also possessed the thriving shipping port of New Orleans, which was vital to American commercial interests.

d. Haiti and the Caribbean

The Caribbean, a series of rich sugar islands held by various European powers including Spain, France, and Britain, posed a unique challenge to America as well. The islands provided up to 90 percent of Europe’s sugar and used slave labor to do so. In 1791, Toussaint L’Ouverture led a slave revolt on the island of Saint-Domingue, France’s richest colony. A slave revolt so close to America filled many white southerners with fear.

e. Trans-Appalachia

The region of greatest growth within the United States was the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains. This was also the area most affected by fears of continued British influence on the region’s Indian peoples. Migration, which was usually a family affair, was increasingly becoming part of American life. As western populations grew and cities like Cincinnati flourished, river traffic grew as well. Control of New Orleans increasingly became an important issue to western farmers and merchants alike.

1. A NATIONAL ECONOMY

In 1800, the United States was predominantly a producer of raw materials. As a developing nation, the United States needed to be wary of economic domination by stronger, more established nations. This fear is illustrated by the concern over Spanish control of New Orleans.

a. Cotton and the Economy of the Young Republic

In 1800 the United States was a predominately rural and agricultural nation. In the north, crops were grown for subsistence and home consumption rather than for commercial sale. In the South, plantation agriculture and the use of slavery in the production of cotton for commercial sale dominated the economy. Technological advances like the cotton gin further ingrained cotton in the South’s economy.

b. Shipping and the Economic Boom

Restrictions on American trade in the West Indies did not deter the development of a strong shipping industry centered in Atlantic ports. A series of wars between Britain and France provided a substantial economic opportunity for American shipping. America’s neutral status enabled American ships to carry goods to both Britain and France while the conflict ensured that the two nations were not trading with one another. These European conflicts also enabled American shipping interests to seize lucrative opportunities in the China trade. American participation in shipping also fostered a strong shipbuilding industry within the United States and led to an innovation in ship speed with the clipper ship.

1. THE JEFFERSON PRESIDENCY

Jefferson’s inauguration as the third president of the United States was a momentous accomplishment. It marked the peaceful transition of power from the Federalists to the Republicans. Jefferson’s presidency would demonstrate that a strong party system could shape national policy without leading to a dictatorship or popular revolt.

a. Republican Agrarianism

Jefferson’s political philosophy focused on westward expansion. He believed that European governments had failed because they, unlike the United States, lacked room to grow. Jefferson’s vision of America was of a nation of small farmers, independent and self-sufficient. For this dream to be reality, westward expansion was necessary. However, expansion was not all good. Westward expansion caused environmental damage, soil exhaustion, instability in communities, and fostered mistreatment and even abuse of Indian peoples who continued to be forced out of the way of white expansion.

b. Jefferson’s Government

Thomas Jefferson’s plan for the American government involved “simplicity and virtue.” He cut internal taxes, reduced the size of the Army and the Navy, and reduced the number of government employees. Jefferson was successful in these reductions in part because the national government had a much smaller role in American life than it does today. The small national government also helps to explain the rather unimpressive appearance of the nation’s capital at the time.

c. An Independent Judiciary

The switch from Federalist party leadership to Republican party leadership raised questions about whether or not the judiciary should be independent of politics. *Marbury v. Madison* settled the issue. Chief Justice Marshall defended the independence of the judiciary and the principle of judicial review. Under Chief Justice Marshall’s leadership the Supreme Court would become a strong nationalizing force.

d. Opportunity: The Louisiana Purchase

In 1803, France and Britain were at war again. America, however, was protected from the fighting by the Atlantic Ocean. Napoleon considered North America a potential battleground for the European conflict and secretly re-acquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain. Jefferson instructed Robert Livingston to negotiate to buy New Orleans from France for $2 million. In need of money to continue his military campaigns, Napoleon offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory for $15 million. Although not authorized by the Constitution to agree to such a deal, Jefferson, arguing that expansion was necessary for liberty and the nation’s republican future, purchased the Louisiana Territory.

e. Incorporating Louisiana

The immediate issue surrounding the Louisiana Purchase involved the Spanish and French residents of the territory. In order to accommodate the current residents while still incorporating the territory into America, Louisiana was allowed to adopt a legal code based on French civil law. In 1812 with the required 60,000 free inhabitants, Louisiana was admitted to the union.

f. Texas and the Struggle for Mexican Independence

Spain objected to Napoleon’s sale of Louisiana to the United States. Now Spanish Mexico and the United States shared a common border. Conflict between Spain and France in Mexico resulted in the Spanish loss of Mexico. Two popular revolts against the French king Joseph Bonaparte, the first led by Father Miguel Hidalgo and the second led by Father Jose Maria Morelos, were suppressed by royalists. But in 1812 a small force led by Mexican republicans, but composed mostly of Americans, invaded Texas, captured San Antonio, and declared Texas independent. A year later the Mexican republicans were defeated by the royalist army.

1. RENEWED IMPERIAL RIVALRY IN NORTH AMERICA

Jefferson easily won re-election in 1804 after the Louisiana Purchase. The Federalists continued to dwindle to a small sectional group unable to attract voters outside of New England.

a. Problems with Neutral Rights

As the wars between Britain and France continued, American shipping continued to profit from America’s neutral status in the conflict. In 1805 the British beggar targeted the American re-export trade by seizing American ships carrying French West Indian goods to Europe. Americans viewed these seizures as a violation of their neutral status. British sailors frequently deserted to American ships. As a result, the British began stopping American ships and forcibly impressing anyone they suspected to be a deserter. At least 6,000 innocent American citizens were forcibly impressed into the British navy from 1803 to 1812 as a result of this policy.

b. The Embargo Act

Jefferson insisted on America’s right, as a neutral nation, to ship goods to Europe. In 1806, Congress passed the Non-Importation Act to boycott British goods. The boycott was not successful. In 1807 Jefferson imposed the Embargo Act, which prohibited American ships from sailing to any foreign port. While the act was intended to force Britain and France to respect American neutrality, instead the act brought commerce to a standstill and threw the nation into an economic depression.

c. Madison and the Failure of “Peaceable Coercion”

James Madison succeeded Jefferson to the American presidency. The Embargo Act had little effect on the European powers and thus was repealed by Congress. The struggle to remain neutral in disputes between powerful European nations continued.

d. A Contradictory Indian Policy

In the West, Indian nations were determined to resist the white settlers that pushed into their territories. North of the Ohio River lived the Northwest Confederation of the Shawnees, Delewares, Miamis, Potowatomis, and other small tribes. To the south lived the “Five Civilized Tribes,” the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and the Seminoles. In violation of the Indian Intercourse Act of 1790, which required treaties between the American government and Indian tribes, white settlers pushed ahead of treaty boundaries and further into Indian territory. Indians were trapped in an unending cycle of invasion, resistance, and defeat. After the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson ordered Indian groups to new lands west of the Mississippi River and away from the encroachment of white settlers. Because Jefferson’s Indian policy did nothing to halt westward expansion, Indian peoples had little hope but to relocate.

e. Indian Resistance

The Shawnees of the Ohio Valley had resisted white settlement since the 1750s. Continuing pressure from settlers left the Shawnee divided. One group, led by Black Hoof, accepted acculturation. The rest of the tribe tried to maintain traditional cultural ways. One group of Shawnees, led by Techumseh, sought refuge from white settlement further west. There Techumseh molded his brother Tenskwatawa’s message into a powerful Indian resistance movement that had British support.

1. THE WAR OF 1812

President Madison cited British support of western Indians and continued hostilities over neutral shipping rights when he asked Congress for a declaration of war against Britain. Congress granted the request and declared war on June 18, 1812.

a. The War Hawks

The War Hawks, a group of young political leaders elected to Congress in 1810, found all aspects of British interference intolerable. The War Hawks wanted to occupy Florida to block escape routes for runaway slaves. Westerners also wanted to invade Canada in order to end the potential threat of Northwest Indians supported by the British. Because of Jefferson’s cutbacks in government spending, both the Army and Navy were weak. In the summer of 1814, the British invaded and burned Washington D.C. in a humiliating defeat for the Americans.

b. The Campaigns Against the Northern and Southern Indians

In the Northwest, the British-Indian Alliance defeated American forces and ruined American ambitions of expansion. In July 1812 the American push into western Canada was repulsed. One reason for the defeat was that the New England states actively opposed the war. The first of the southern Indian tribes to fight the Americans were the Creeks. At the end of the Creek War in 1814, Andrew Jackson demanded large land concessions from the Creeks, the equivalent of one-half of their territory.

c. The Hartford Convention

Federalist opposition to the war culminated in the Hartford Convention of 1814. Federalist representatives from five New England states met to discuss specific grievances. The convention determined that a state had the right to protect its citizens from unconstitutional laws. This stance came to be known as the “nullification doctrine.”

d. The Treaty of Ghent

The peace treaty that ended the War of 1812 was signed at Ghent, Belgium on Christmas Eve 1814. The treaty was inconclusive. The major issues that had sparked the war, impressments and neutral rights, were not mentioned in the treaty. The British did agree to vacate some western posts. The War of 1812 was one of America’s most divisive wars and a dangerous risk to the new republic. Although there were no clear winners, it was apparent that the losers were the Northwestern Indian nations and their southern allies. Abandonment of the Indians by the British in the Treaty of Ghent sealed their defeat.

1. DEFINING THE BOUNDARIES

The “Era of Good Feelings” which followed the War of 1812 signaled a period in American political history where politicians largely agreed on the national agenda. A series of diplomatic achievements by John Quincy Adams gave the nation a more sharply defined definition.

a. Another Westward Surge

The end of the War of 1812 was followed by a western surge to the Mississippi River that populated the Old Northwest (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) and the Old Southwest (western Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana). Both push and pull factors accounted for the large westward migration. Overpopulated land in the east helped push farmers off the land while open western territories pulled them west in search of land. The affordable price of western land was perhaps the most important pull factor. In the Land Act of 1820, Congress set the price of land at $1.25 per acre with a minimum purchase of eighty acres. Geography also facilitated lateral westward movement. This enabled the already entrenched regional cultures to expand westward with settlers and prevented the West from forming a third, unified political region.

b. The Election of 1816 and the Era of Good Feelings

In 1816, James Monroe was elected president. In the election of 1820 Monroe ran unopposed and was re-elected. This signaled the triumph of Jeffersonian Republicans over the Federalists.

c. The American System

Monroe sought a government of national unity and chose members of his cabinet to reflect both Northern and Southern interests. Monroe supported the “American System,” a program of national economic development. The plan called for Republicans to break with Jefferson and support Federalist proposed measures like the national bank, a tariff on imported goods, and a national system of roads and canals. In 1816 Congress chartered the Second Bank of the United States for twenty years. The Tariff of 1816 was the first substantial protective tariff in American history. Internal improvements, the third piece of the American System, proved to be more controversial.

d. The Diplomacy of John Quincy Adams

John Quincy Adams, Monroe’s Secretary of State, facilitated many important treaties that helped further define the United States. The Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817 and the Convention of 1818 fixed the border between Canada and the United States at the 49th parallel and established joint occupation of Oregon territory. The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 provided for the Spanish cession of Florida to the United States and required that the Spanish drop all claims to the Louisiana and Oregon territories. Finally, Adams drafted the Monroe Doctrine which called for an end to colonization in the Western Hemisphere by European powers and established the intervention of European nations into Western Hemisphere nations as a direct threat to the United States.

e. The Panic of 1819

When the European wars ended, European economic activities rebounded and the years of prosperity enjoyed by America’s shipping industry came to an end. Inexpensive European goods flooded the market and the western land boom turned into a speculative frenzy. The result was what is known as the Panic of 1819. The United States was clearly becoming a nation dominated by commerce.

f. The Missouri Compromise

America’s westward expansion raised issues about the institution of slavery. The northwest Ordinance of 1787 banned slavery in trans-Appalachia but made no mention of it elsewhere. The Northern States, all of which had abolished slavery by 1819, favored a policy of containment for the institution of slavery. Southerners, concerned with sectional balance and the continuation of slavery, favored the system’s expansion into the western territories. In 1820, Congress achieved a compromise. The Missouri Compromise maintained the balance between free and slave states. Slavery was prohibited north of the southern boundary of Missouri but was permitted south of that line.

**Chapter 9 Questions:**

**1. The Economy of the Young Republic:** What type of economy characterized the young republic? How was this reflected in the census of 1800? What traditions did most farm families follow? What regional differences were there? What types of trade were there and what was the growing importance of cotton?

**3. Republican Agrarianism:** What were the basic views of Jefferson and what experiences, events, and writings inspired his views? What were the negative aspects of Jefferson’s expanding agrarian republic?

**4. Jefferson’s Government:** How did Jefferson try to carry out his ideas of government? What did he achieve?

**5. An Independent Judiciary:** How did an independent judiciary emerge from a Federalist conflict with Jefferson?

**6. Opportunity:** The Louisiana Purchase: What were the circumstances behind the U.S. opportunity to buy Louisiana Territory? How did it change the size of the United States? How did various sections of the country react?

**7. Incorporating Louisiana:** What issues were involved incorporating Louisiana? Who was William Claiborne and how did he achieve combining two different communities? When was Louisiana made a state?

**8. Texas and the Struggle for Mexican Independence:** What events in Europe affected Mexico and Texas?

**9. Problems with Neutral Rights:** What was the source of the neutral rights problem and how did Jefferson try to deal with it? What was the impressment issue and how extensive was it?

**10. The Embargo Act:** What was the Embargo Act and what circumstances prompted it? What disadvantage did the U.S. have in challenging the British on this issue? What were the results?

**11. Madison and the Failure of “Peaceable Coercion:”** How did Madison continue to try “peaceable coercion?” Why did the Federalists gain in the election of 1808? What happened to the Embargo Act and other attempts to deal with British and French violations of neutrality?

**12. Indian Resistance:** Where was the resistance and what group was involved? How did they try to resist American settlers’ intrusion? What were the roles and views of Black Hoof, Tecumseh, and Tenskwatawa? How were these views received?

**13. The War Hawks:** Who were the War Hawks and what area did they represent? What were the views of the War Hawks? How did the vote on Madison’s war declaration show sectionalism? What were America’s disadvantages?

**14. The Campaigns Against Canada:** Why did Americans attack Canada? Why did the invasion fail? What effect did it have on Canada?

**15. War in the South:** How did the war develop in the South? What groups were involved? What goals were achieved and which ones were not?

**16. The Hartford Convention:** What was The Hartford Convention? What grievances were aired?

**17. The Treaty of Ghent:** What were the terms of the treaty? What effect did the war have on American morale and British attitude? Why was the war also dangerous to unity? Who were the major losers?

**18. The Second Great Awakening on the Frontier:** What was the Second Great Awakening and how did it help national unity? What groups participated and where was it the strongest? What effect did it have on denominations? Who made up the majority of church members?

**19. The Election of 1816 and the Era of Good Feelings:** What were the results of the election and how did Monroe encourage the Era of Good Feelings? What type of transitions took place in this period? How did both Madison and Monroe break with Jeffersonianism? What issues surrounded internal improvements?

**20. The Diplomacy of John Quincy Adams:** What achievements were gained via diplomacy of John Quincy Adams? What were the issues behind the development of the Monroe Doctrine? Why was it successful?

**21. The Panic of 1819:** What were the causes and the outcome of the panic of 1819? What were “stay laws?” Who did Western farmers blame for their problems? How did urban workers fare? How did Southern planters react? What did the panic symbolize?

**22. The Missouri Compromise:** Why did proposed entry of Missouri as a state provoke a need for compromise? What issues were raised? What were the terms of compromise and who played a major role in achieving it?