Chapter 9
The Triumph and Collapse of Jeffersonian Republicanism, 1800—1824

Chapter Summary

Chapter 9 offers a survey of the Republican era from 1800—1824, including the presidential administrations of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe. Topics discussed in this chapter include the final collapse of the Federalist party, the domination and eventual transformation of the Republican Party, early nineteenth-century territorial expansion, the War of 1812, the tensions between nationalism and sectionalism, the initiation of the national debate on slavery with the Missouri Compromise, and the collapse of the Republican Party in the election of 1824.

I. Jefferson’s Presidency
   A. Reform at Home
   B. The Louisiana Purchase
   C. Florida and Western Schemes
   D. Embargo and a Crippled Presidency

II. Madison and the Coming of War
   A. The Failure of Economic Sanctions
   B. The Frontier and Indian Resistance
   C. Decision for War

III. The War of 1812
   A. Setbacks in Canada
   B. Western Victories and British Offensives
   C. The Treaty of Ghent and the Battle of New Orleans

IV. The Era of Good Feelings
   A. Economic Nationalism
   B. Judicial Nationalism
   C. Toward a Continental Empire

V. The Breakdown of Unity
   A. The Panic of 1819
   B. The Missouri Compromise
   C. The Election of 1824

VI. Conclusion
Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 9, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the fundamentals of Jeffersonian democracy.

2. Describe the elements of Albert Gallatin’s fiscal program and contrast it with the fiscal program of Alexander Hamilton.

3. Explain the circumstances surrounding the Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison* and understand the historical significance of the court’s decision.

4. List the reasons why Jefferson was interested in securing the Louisiana Territory from France, and list the reasons why Napoleon was willing to part with it.

5. Explain why Federalists opposed the Louisiana Purchase.

6. Explain the reasons for the Burr conspiracy and comment on its outcome.

7. Outline the provisions of the Embargo Act of 1807 and explain its impact on the American economy.

8. Explain the provisions and effectiveness of the Non-intercourse Act.

9. Connect the British Orders in Council and Macon’s Bill No. 2 to the failure of economic sanctions against France and Britain.

10. Identify Tecumseh and the Prophet Tenkwatawa and explain their roles in the development of the pan-Indian resistance movement.

11. Identify William Henry Harrison and his role in the Battle of Tippecanoe.

12. Explain the emergence of the War Hawks and identify the leading figures within this Congressional faction.

13. Analyze the Congressional vote for war in 1812 and explain the extent to which party and region defined support or opposition for war.


15. List three examples of Congressional support for economic nationalism between 1816 and 1817.


17. Describe the foreign ministry of John Quincy Adams and identify three treaties negotiated by Adams that promoted diplomatic nationalism.

18. Identify and explain the historical significance of the Monroe Doctrine.
19. Explain the provisions of the Missouri Compromise and how its enactment set the stage for the nineteenth-century debate over slavery.

20. Explain how the election of 1824 signaled the end of the era of good feelings.

**Topics for Classroom Lectures**

1. Deliver a lecture on the fundamental principles of Jeffersonian democracy. Start with the premise that the evolution of American politics has generally been a movement to the left in that we have generally directed political reform toward expanding the principle of democracy and making it more inclusive. How did the emergence of Jeffersonian democracy initiate this process? Explain Jefferson's reverence for the yeoman farmer, his contempt for the growth of business and industry, and his vision of American political leadership as an aristocracy of the talented. Place Jefferson in historical context by asking students if Jefferson was more democratic than the Federalists who preceded him and if his political ideology seems democratic to Americans today.

2. Discuss the Louisiana Territory and how the debate over its acquisition reflected changes in the Federalist and Republican parties during the first Jefferson administration. Why did Federalists oppose the purchase? Why did Republicans support it? Comment on the Republicans’ willingness to overlook constitutional issues in order to preserve relations with France and guarantee the growth of Republican support. To what extent were Federalists sounding like old Republicans and to what extent were Republicans sounding like old Federalists? How did gaining control of the federal government change Republicans?

3. Deliver a lecture on the Monroe Doctrine and why it is considered the most important piece of American foreign policy in early American history. Why did Monroe issue the statement? How does it reflect diplomatic nationalism? Ask students to comment on its importance to future American relations with Latin America.

4. Prepare a lecture on the Congressional debate that culminated in the Missouri Compromise. Outline and explain the provisions of the Tallmadge amendment. Establish the question of debate: Did Congress have the authority to regulate the institution of slavery? Explain the use of property rights in the Fifth Amendment and the claim to equal access to new lands as the foundations of the southern opposition to the amendment. Then, explain how the North used the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 as a legal precedent allowing Congressional regulation of the institution of slavery. Is the debate over slavery in 1820 primarily a legal argument or a moral debate?

**Topics for Classroom Discussion and Essays**

1. Discuss the transformation of the Republican Party between 1800 and 1824. How did Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe contribute to altering the original ideology of the Republican Party? Look at issues such as states rights, the agrarian ideal, the appeal to the common man, and strict construction of the Constitution and assess the extent to which Republican views on these issues were preserved or altered during the party’s domination of national politics between 1800 and 1824.

2. Discuss the War of 1812 as the Second War for American Independence. What issues pushed the United States into war with Britain? Were all the factors that contributed to the war defensive or was there evidence of some degree of aggression among war hawks? Even though the war ended as a draw, did Americans succeed in proving anything to themselves or to Britain? What issues were resolved as a result of the war?
3. Many historians characterize the years from 1815 to 1824 as a period of nationalism in American history. Conduct a class discussion in which you ask students to consider the extent to which nationalism is a valid term to use in describing the United States during this period. Introduce and define the terms nationalism and sectionalism. Look at the trends that historians generally associate with nineteenth-century nationalism and ask students to comment on the ways in which they reflect nationalism. Then, have students look at the Panic of 1819 and the Missouri Compromise and connect them to sectionalism. Were these sectional concerns new issues that temporarily interrupted nationalism, or was nationalism a temporary reprieve from the persistent aggravation of a sectionalism that dated back to colonial times?

4. Discuss American foreign policy between 1800 and 1824. What issues defined American foreign policy during the early nineteenth century? Was American policy defensive or aggressive? Were there sectional implications in foreign policy? How did foreign policy during this period promote nationalism?

Topics for Term Papers and Class Projects

1. Investigate the controversy surrounding Thomas Jefferson and his position on the issue of slavery. One approach to such a paper would be to research Jefferson's thoughts and writings about slavery and liberty and explain how Jefferson was able to reconcile the two. A more personal approach would be a study of the controversial relationship between Jefferson and his female slave Sally Hemings.

2. Research the life of Aaron Burr, focusing on his role in the Republican Party. Trace his career from his choice as Jefferson's vice presidential running mate in 1800 to his brush with conviction of treason after the Burr conspiracy in 1807.

3. Look at the election of 1824 as a turning point in American political history. Use the election to explore the status of the Republican Party by 1824. How did Americans feel about the loss of democracy through the entrenchment of Republican elitism? How would many Americans feel about Jackson's loss of the presidency in 1824? How had the way been opened for the emergence of Jacksonian democracy?

Resources for Lectures and Research Projects

Audio-Visual Resources

*Jefferson's Bloodline.* Frontline Series. Thomas Lennon, 2000, 60 minutes. This video explores the ongoing controversy regarding Thomas Jefferson's relationship with his slave Sally Hemings.


*Thomas Jefferson.* Florentine Films, 1997. This two-part series, crafted by Ken Burns, chronicles the life of Thomas Jefferson while providing students exposure to the art, architecture, and literature of Jefferson's time.