

BOOK TWO

# A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Beginning of the United States

1781-1850



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## BOOK TWO: The Beginning of the United States

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# CONTENTS

## Chapter

<b>1</b>	The Government of the United States . . . . .	1
	The State Governments . . . . .	2
	The Articles of Confederation . . . . .	4
	The New Land . . . . .	6
<b>2</b>	The Constitution . . . . .	9
	A Special Meeting . . . . .	9
	The Constitutional Convention . . . . .	9
	The Constitution . . . . .	14
	The Constitution Is Ready . . . . .	16
<b>3</b>	President George Washington . . . . .	19
	The New Federal Government . . . . .	19
	New States . . . . .	25
	The United States and Other Countries . . . . .	25
	Federalists and Republicans . . . . .	27
<b>4</b>	President John Adams . . . . .	29
	War between England and France . . . . .	29
	Jefferson Becomes the President . . . . .	32
<b>5</b>	President Thomas Jefferson . . . . .	35
	The Federal Government . . . . .	35
	The Louisiana Territory . . . . .	36
	Lewis and Clark . . . . .	39
<b>6</b>	The War of 1812 . . . . .	43
	The Land of the United States . . . . .	43
	Trade with Other Countries . . . . .	45
	The War of 1812 . . . . .	49
<b>7</b>	After the War of 1812 . . . . .	55
	Trade . . . . .	55
	Transportation . . . . .	56
	Trouble with Money . . . . .	57

	African Americans in the New States . . . . .	58
	The United States and Spain . . . . .	62
	President Monroe and Other Countries . . . . .	64
<b>8</b>	President Andrew Jackson . . . . .	65
	The Poor Man's President . . . . .	65
	The First Americans . . . . .	68
	The Federal Banks . . . . .	71
	Taxes on Imports . . . . .	72
<b>9</b>	Land in the West . . . . .	75
	Texas . . . . .	76
	New States . . . . .	78
	President Van Buren . . . . .	79
	Presidents Tyler and Polk . . . . .	81
	The Oregon Territory . . . . .	84
	The War against Mexico . . . . .	85
	California . . . . .	87

# CHAPTER 1

## The Government of the United States



The United States after the Revolution

## **The State Governments**

In 1775, the colonies started new governments. These state governments did not have to listen to the English governor or the laws of England.

Men in each state wrote a special paper. This paper is called a constitution. The constitution says what the government can do. It also says what the government can not do. People can read the constitution. Then they know about their government. The state government has to obey the constitution of the state. The people in the state have to obey this constitution, too.

The state constitutions have a special part. It is called the bill of rights. The bill of rights tells the people in the states about their rights. Each bill of rights says that people can have any religion. The government can not make people pay taxes for a church.

Each bill of rights says that many people can meet and talk about their government. People can speak against the government. Each bill of rights says that rich men and poor men have the same rights.

Each bill of rights also tells about crime. It is a crime when someone breaks a law. The government may think that someone broke a law. The government has to tell that person about the law. It can not just keep that person in jail. The government has to have a trial for that person. At the trial, the government must show that the person broke a law. Some other people from the state must listen to the government and the person. Then they decide if the person has broken the law.

By 1776, many colonies had started their state governments. The Continental Congress decided that the states should work together. The states would be members of a confederation.

Some members of the Continental Congress thought that the government of the Confederation should be strong. It should be stronger than each state government. Other members of the Continental Congress did not want one strong government for the Confederation.

Some members of the Continental Congress wrote a paper about the government for the Confederation. This paper was called the Articles of Confederation. The Continental Congress talked about the Articles of Confederation for a long time.

The Articles of Confederation said that the states would not have to obey the laws of England. Each state could make its own laws. The states would work together in the Confederation. Together, the states would be called the United States of America. The people in the United States are called Americans. The United States of America would have a congress. This congress could make some laws for all the states. Each state would send representatives to the congress of the Confederation.

In 1777, the Continental Congress sent the Articles of Confederation to each state government. Then the state governments had to vote. They had to decide if the Articles of Confederation would make a good government for the Confederation. They also had to decide if their state wanted to become part of the Confederation. The governments of many states said that their states would obey the Articles of



Confederation. Then these states became part of the Confederation.

The government of Maryland said that it would not join the Confederation. First, it wanted the Continental Congress to talk about the land west of the states. This land was between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Before the Revolution, England had owned this land. After the Revolution, some states said that they owned this land. But Maryland did not want these states to own this land. Maryland thought that the United States should own this land.

By 1781, the states said that they did not own any land west of the Appalachian Mountains. The United States owned this land. Then Maryland joined the Confederation.

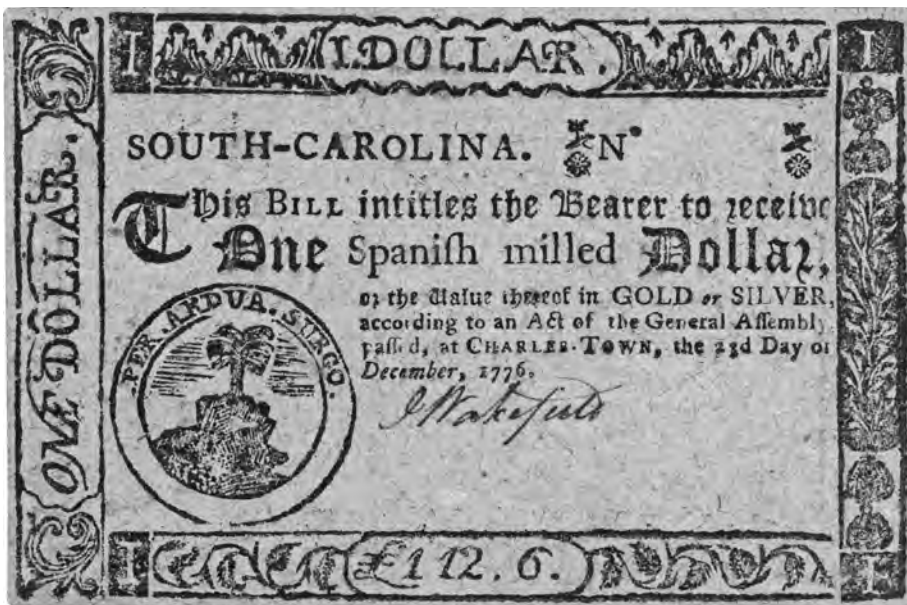
In 1781, the United States was still fighting the Revolution. All of the states had decided to become part of the Confederation. So the United States started its new government. Americans had to vote for representatives to the congress of the Confederation. This congress had to obey the Articles of Confederation.

### **The Articles of Confederation**

The Articles of Confederation said that each state would have one vote in the congress. No state would be stronger than the other states. No representative would have more power than any other representative. No one would be a king of the United States.

The congress could do some things for people in all the states. It could start a war against other countries. It could make an army for the

Confederation. It could make treaties with other countries. It could make coins and paper money.



**Paper money of the Confederation.**

The Confederation did not have any gold and silver. So it did not make coins and paper money. Some states had gold and silver. They made coins and paper money. But these states would not give their gold and silver to the Confederation. So the Confederation could not make one kind of money for the people in all the states. Americans used coins and paper money from some states, England, and other countries.

Congress could not do many other things. It could not make people pay tax money to the Confederation. It could only ask the states for money. It could not make them pay this money. Most of the time, the states did not give any money to the Confederation.

The Articles of Confederation did not say that the congress could make laws about trade. So state governments made their own laws about trade. These laws were not the same. Some state governments said that people in their states had to pay taxes on imports. In these states, imports cost more money. Other state governments did not make laws about taxes on imports. Americans in these states did not have to pay so much money for imports.

The congress of the Confederation also could not make laws about trade between states. So all state governments did not have the same laws about this kind of trade. Some state governments said that people had to pay taxes on things from other states.

Some state governments had taxes on imports from other countries. Merchants did not want to pay these taxes. They did not want to sell things for so much money. So merchants in these states bought imports from merchants in other states. These states did not have taxes on imports. Then merchants did not pay taxes on imports. Then they could still sell imports for less money.

## **The New Land**

In 1783, the Revolution was over. Then the Confederation owned some land in America. It was between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River. Some of this land became territories of the United States. One territory was between the Ohio River and the Mississippi River. It was called the Northwest Territory.

The treaty with England said that the English army could not have forts in the Northwest Territory

anymore. But the English army did not leave these forts. England did not think that the Confederation was strong. So it did not think that the Confederation could make the English army leave forts in the Northwest Territory.

After the Revolution, many Americans moved to the territories. Then they thought that they owned some of the land. But many first Americans already lived in the territories. They did not want the Americans to take their land. Sometimes, the first Americans and the Americans fought about the land. The Americans were afraid of these first Americans. They were also afraid of the English army. The Confederation did not have an army. So it could not help the Americans in the territories.

The Americans in the territories also fought against each other about land. The congress did not want them to fight. So in 1785, the congress of the Confederation made a law. It said that Americans could buy special parts of the land in the territories. The owners would know all about their parts of the land. Then owners did not have to fight about their land.

The Confederation wanted Americans to buy land in the territories. Then it could get more money. This money could pay for the new government and the Revolution. But many Americans did not have enough money. So companies bought some of the land. They did not pay the government much money for it. They sold it to Americans. Sometimes, they got rich.

Americans in the territories wanted to sell some of their things to people in the states. There were two

ways to travel from the territories to the states. People could go over the Appalachian Mountains or sail down the rivers. It was hard to travel over these mountains. There were no roads. So most people sailed down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. They had to go through the port of New Orleans. Then they could go to the cities on the coast.

Spain owned New Orleans. Americans in the territories wanted the Confederation to be stronger. Then the Confederation could make sure that Spain would always let them go through New Orleans.

In 1787, the congress made a special law about the Northwest Territory. It said that Americans in this territory had to start a government. It also told Americans how this land could become states. When 60,000 people lived in part of this territory, they could make a state. They had to write a state constitution. Then they had to ask the congress if their land could become a state. Americans could not make more than five states out of the Northwest Territory. This law also said that the Americans in this territory could not own slaves.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Constitution

### **A Special Meeting**

In September 1786, some Americans from different states decided to have a special meeting. They wanted to talk about trade. They asked each state to send representatives to this meeting. But only a few states sent representatives to this meeting at Annapolis, Maryland. These states were Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York.

At the meeting, the representatives decided to have another meeting. Then representatives from all the states could come to this meeting. They could talk about the laws about trade and the Articles of Confederation. This meeting would be in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1787.

### **The Constitutional Convention**

In May 1787, most states sent representatives to the meeting in Philadelphia. This meeting was called the Constitutional Convention. Rhode Island did not send any representatives to this meeting. The representatives decided that George Washington should be the leader of this convention. They also decided that other people and men from newspapers could not go to this convention.



**George Washington talked to the men at the Constitutional Convention.**

The representatives talked about the Articles of Confederation. They also talked about the government of the Confederation. The congress of the Confederation did not have enough powers. It could not make laws about many things.

The representatives decided that the United States needed a different kind of government. The representatives thought that the new government had to have more power than the government of the Confederation. This government would be a federal government. It would have a Congress. The members of Congress would have meetings. At these meetings, they would be able to make laws about more things. All the states would have to obey the laws of Congress.

The representatives thought that the federal government should have a constitution. The

constitution would tell how the federal government works. It would tell about the powers of the federal government. It would also tell about the powers of the state governments.

The representatives talked about the states and the federal government. Some states were larger than other states. The larger states thought that they should have more power in Congress. The larger states thought that they should have more votes. The smaller states thought that each state should have the same number of votes.

At last, the representatives decided that Congress would have two parts. One part would be called the Senate. The other part would be called the House of Representatives. Each state would send two people to the Senate. These people would be called senators. Each senator would have one vote in the Senate.

Each state would also send representatives to the House of Representatives. A lot of people lived in some states. So these states would have many representatives in the House of Representatives. Only a few people lived in other states. These states would have only a few representatives in the House of Representatives.

The representatives at the Constitutional Convention said that the federal government could get tax money from all the states. States would pay tax money for every person in their state. States with many people would pay a lot of tax money to the federal government. States with fewer people would pay less tax money.

The representatives at this meeting had to talk about this tax money. They also had to talk about



the number of representatives in the House of Representatives. Many slaves lived in the southern states. The representatives from these states wanted their states to have many representatives in the House of Representatives. They wanted to count the slaves in their states. Then their states could have a lot of representatives in the House of Representatives. But they did not want to pay taxes for the slaves in their states.

The representatives from the northern states wanted each state to pay taxes for all the people in the state. They wanted the southern states to pay taxes for the slaves in their states. But they did not think that the southern states should have any representatives for the slaves.

At last, the representatives at the Constitutional Convention decided how to count the people in each state. The federal government would count all white Americans and three out of five slaves in each state. Then each state would pay taxes for this number of people. Each state would also use this number to decide on its number of representatives in the House of Representatives.

The representatives from the North and from the South did not think the same way about trade. Many people in the North made things and sold them. They owned factories. These people were manufacturers. They made some of the same things as English manufacturers. But the English manufacturers made them for less money. So they sold these things to Americans for less money.

American manufacturers wanted Americans to buy American things. They wanted the federal

government to make laws about taxes on imports. Then in all the states, imports would cost the same as American things.

In the South, there were no factories. Most people were not manufacturers. They were farmers. They wanted to buy imports. They did not want the federal government to put a tax on imports.

Many farmers in the South sold food and tobacco to people in other countries. They did not think that the federal government should put a tax on these exports. This tax would make the exports cost more money in other countries. The people in the South wanted Europeans to buy things from them.

At last, the representatives decided that Congress could make laws about taxes for some kinds of trade. Congress could make laws about taxes on imports. But it could not make laws about taxes on exports.

Americans did not all think the same way about African Americans. Some Americans thought that they could own African Americans. Most of these slave owners lived in the southern states. Other Americans did not think that African Americans should be slaves. Some slave owners let their slaves go free. Most of these slave owners were in the northern states.

Many northern states had laws about African Americans. The laws said that African Americans would be free after the Revolution.

The representatives at the Constitutional Convention had to think about slaves. Some of them thought that no more slaves should come to the United States. Other representatives wanted more slaves in the country. At last, the representatives decided that Americans could buy more slaves for 20

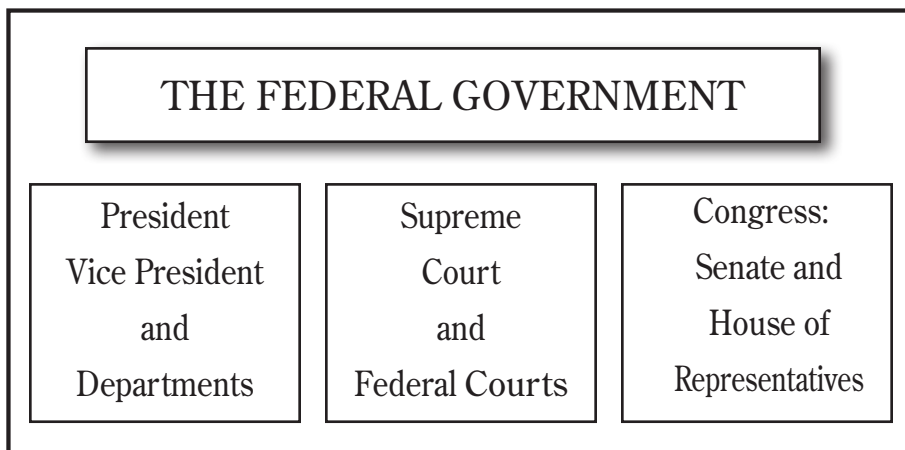
more years. Then Congress would decide about more slaves in the United States.

## The Constitution

In 1787, some representatives wrote the Constitution of the United States. Today, the government of the United States still has to obey the Constitution.

The Constitution says that the federal government has many powers. The federal government can make many kinds of laws. All people in the United States have to obey these laws.

The Constitution says that the states have some powers. But they do not have the same powers as the federal government. Each state makes its own laws about education, marriage, and divorce. Each state makes laws about the roads in its state. Each state also makes laws about the voters in its state. People have to obey the laws in their state.



The Constitution says that the federal government has three parts. These parts are the president, Congress, and the federal courts. No part has more power than the other parts. But the parts have different powers.

The president is the leader of the United States. The president talks to Congress about laws. He can tell Congress to have a special meeting. He can ask Congress to make a law. But he can not make any laws without Congress. The president can pick people to be judges in the federal courts. But the Senate has to say that these people can be judges. The president can also make a treaty with another country. But the Senate has to decide if the United States will obey this treaty.

Congress has two parts. They are the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each part of Congress talks about a law and votes about it. In both parts of Congress, more than half of its members have to vote for a law. Then Congress can make the law.

Congress makes the laws of the federal government. Congress can make laws about trade with other countries. It can also make laws about trade between the states. It can decide about coins and paper money for the United States. It can decide if the United States should fight a war against another country.

Some federal laws are about taxes. The money from taxes pays for the army and navy, the federal government, and other things. Congress decides how to spend the money of the federal government.

The president can decide that a federal law is not good. He can veto the law. Then Americans do not have to obey this law. But both parts of Congress can vote again. If more than two out of three members of each part vote for this law, Congress can make this law. Then all the people in the United States have to obey this law.

Congress can not just take the president's job away from him. The House of Representatives may say that the president has broken some laws. Then the Senate must have a trial for the president. It must show that the president broke some laws. Then the vice president becomes the new president.

Congress also can make laws for the people in the territories of the United States. Congress decides about new states. It can say that a part of a territory can become a state in the United States.

The Constitution says that the federal government has a Supreme Court and federal courts. When people break a federal law, the federal courts have a trial for them. These courts decide about fights between people from different states.

The Supreme Court has more power than any other court in the United States. It can decide about fights between the states. It can listen to fights from other federal courts. Then it decides about these fights.

The Constitution tells how Americans can write new parts of the Constitution. New parts of the Constitution are called amendments. It is hard to make an amendment to the Constitution. Congress has to write the amendment. Then each state has to vote about the amendment. Three out of four states have to vote for the amendment. Then it becomes part of the Constitution.

## **The Constitution Is Ready**

In September 1787, the Constitution was ready. The representatives at the Constitutional Convention read the Constitution. Most of them said that they wanted it. They wrote their names on it. Then they had to

bring the Constitution back to their states. Nine states had to say that they wanted the Constitution. Then the new government could start.



**The Constitution begins with the words, "We, the People."**

In every state, some Americans wanted the Constitution. They wanted a strong federal government. Other Americans thought that the United States should have one government. But they did not think that this federal government should be very strong. They thought that the federal government should not be able to make laws for all the people in the United States. They thought that each state should make its own laws about many things. They wanted each state to have a lot of power.

These Americans did not like many things in the Constitution. They were afraid that the people in the federal government would have too much power. They were afraid that only rich men could be part of the government.

These Americans wanted to vote for the senators, president, and vice president. But the Constitution said that only representatives of the state government could vote for senators. The Constitution also says that Americans do not vote for the president and vice president. They vote for some people in their state. These people are called electors. The electors vote for the president and the vice president.

Some Americans were also afraid that the new government would take away their rights. They had fought hard for their rights. They thought that the Constitution should say that Americans would always have these rights.

In 1787, each state had a special meeting. The men at each meeting had to decide if their state wanted the Constitution. They talked about the Constitution. They thought about the powers of the federal and state governments. They also thought about the rights of the people.

At many state meetings, some men did not like the Constitution. They talked to the representatives at the Constitutional Convention. They said that their states did not want the Constitution without a Bill of Rights.

The representatives at the Constitutional Convention talked about a Bill of Rights. Then they said that the new Congress would write amendments to the Constitution. These amendments would say that Americans could always have some rights.

In 1788, eleven states said that they wanted the Constitution. Then the new government of the United States could start to work. Rhode Island and North Carolina did not want the Constitution. They did not become part of the new government at this time.



## CHAPTER 3

### President George Washington



**George Washington became the first president.**

#### **The New Federal Government**

In 1788, Americans voted for electors. These electors voted for the first president. George Washington got most of the votes. He became the president. John Adams got the next most votes. He became the vice president.



In each state, Americans voted for their representatives to the House of Representatives. Each state government voted for senators. Then the senators and representatives went to Congress in New York City.

At the first meeting, members of Congress talked about the rights of the people. They wrote ten amendments to the Constitution. These amendments are called the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights gives many rights to Americans. People can have their own religions. People can meet and talk about the government and other things. They can speak against the government. People can write things against the government in a newspaper. People can ask the government to make new laws.

The government must have a special paper to go into people's houses and look for things. This paper is called a warrant. The government must talk to a judge. Then it may be able to get a warrant from a court.

The Bill of Rights tells about crime. When someone breaks a law, the government has to have a trial for that person. The government can not have a trial for someone two times for the same crime. At a trial, people do not have to speak against themselves.

The government can not have trials for people if they did not break a law. Sometimes, there is no law against some things. The government can not have a trial for someone about these things. The government has to make a new law. The new law can say that there is a new kind of crime. If someone breaks the new law, the government can have a trial about that crime.

People can own land and other things. The government may need these things. But it can not just take them away from people. It must pay the people for these things.

Congress had to send the Bill of Rights to the state governments. The states had to say if they wanted these amendments. In 1789, North Carolina said that it wanted the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In 1790, Rhode Island also said that it would be part of the United States. North Carolina and Rhode Island became states. By 1791, all the other states said that they liked the Bill of Rights. These amendments became part of the Constitution.

In 1789, the first Congress started to make laws for the federal government. One law said that there would be federal courts in every state. The law also started the Supreme Court. It would have six members. President Washington asked John Jay to be the leader of the Supreme Court. John Jay became the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Constitution did not say that people should help the president. But the first Congress thought that the president needed help. Congress decided to make three departments. Each department would have people to help the president. The leader of each department was called the secretary. President Washington picked a man to be the secretary of each department.

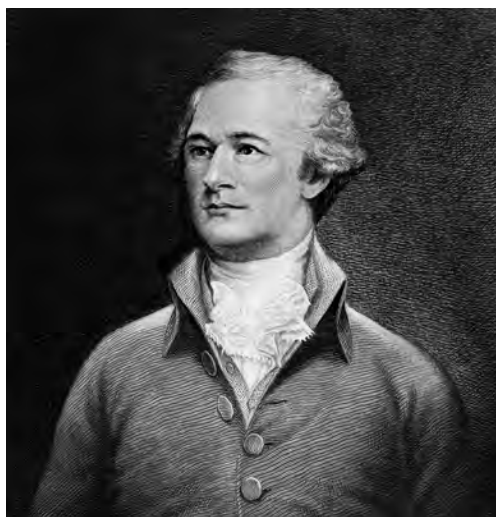
One department is the Department of State. The people in this department talk to the president about the United States and other countries. The first Secretary of State was Thomas Jefferson. Another department is the Department of the Treasury. The people in this department talk to the president about

money. The first Secretary of the Treasury was Alexander Hamilton.

Another department was the Department of War. The people in this department talked to the president about the army and the navy. The first Secretary of War was Henry Knox. Today, this department is called the Department of Defense.

President Washington also picked a man to be Attorney General. The Attorney General talks to the president about federal laws. The first Attorney General was Edmund Randolph.

In 1791, Congress made a law about a federal bank. It said that the federal bank would make coins and paper money for the United States. Then the United States would have its own kind of money. There would be parts of the federal bank in the largest towns. Parts of banks are called branches.



**Alexander Hamilton,  
Secretary of the Treasury**

Hamilton knew that many farmers lived on the land west of the Appalachian Mountains. They grew a lot of corn. They wanted to sell this corn to people

in the East. But it was hard to carry the corn over the Appalachian Mountains. So the farmers made whiskey out of the corn. Then they sold the whiskey to people in the states. It was not so hard to carry the whiskey over the mountains. Many people wanted to buy the whiskey. So the farmers could trade the whiskey for other things.

Hamilton wanted the federal government to have more money. He asked the president and Congress to put a tax on whiskey. Congress made this law in 1791.

Many farmers lived in the western part of Pennsylvania. They lived near the territories. They did not think that they always had to obey federal laws. They would not pay this tax. In 1794, Congress sent the army to the western part of Pennsylvania. The army came to get the taxes from these farmers. Then the farmers knew that the federal government was strong. They had to obey federal laws.



**Settlers fought against the army in Pennsylvania.**



The United States in 1796

## **New States**

In 1790, the United States had 13 states and some territories. In 1791, the settlers in Vermont told Congress that they wanted their land to become a state. Then Vermont became a state.

Some territories were west of the Appalachian Mountains. Some of this land was west of Virginia. The government of Virginia did not own this land anymore. The land was called Kentucky. The settlers in Kentucky told Congress that they wanted their land to be a state. In 1792, Kentucky became a state.

Some land in the territories was west of North Carolina. This land was called Tennessee. Settlers in Tennessee wanted their land to become a state. In 1796, Congress said that Tennessee could become a state.

## **The United States and Other Countries**

In 1793, France was fighting a war against England. The French government had helped Americans in their Revolution. So it sent men to talk to President Washington. They said that the United States should help France in its war. They wanted the United States to fight against England, too.

President Washington did not think that the United States should fight another war. President Washington and Congress made a new law. It said that Americans could not help France or England in their war.

France and England did not like this American law. Each of them thought that the United States should help them in the war. So the English navy and the French navy took many American ships.





**Sailors on French ships fought against sailors on American ships.**

Some Americans also did not like this law. These Americans wanted to trade with French and English merchants. They wanted their ships to go to French and English ports. They also wanted the French and English ships to come to American ports. But these Americans got angry when the French navy or the English navy took American ships.

In 1794, President Washington sent John Jay to England. Jay talked to the English government about trade. Jay and the English government wrote a treaty. It said that American ships could go into English ports. The

English navy would not fight against the American ships. The English ships could also go into American ports. The treaty also said that the English government would take its army out of the Northwest Territory. But English fur traders could still work there.

In 1794, Spain said that it would help France in its war against England. Then Spain heard about the treaty between the United States and England. Spain was afraid that together these countries might fight against the Spanish colonies. So Spain tried to make friends with the United States.

Thomas Pinckney worked for the American government in Spain. The Spanish government met with him. They talked about the United States, its territories, and the Spanish colonies in North America. Spain owned Florida and other land near the American territories.

In 1795, Pinckney and the Spanish government wrote a treaty. It said that American ships could use the Spanish port of New Orleans. American ships would not have to pay Spain to use this port. The treaty also told about a border between Florida and Georgia. A border is a line between two places. Spain would own the land south of this border. The United States would own the land north of this border.

## **Federalists and Republicans**

Sometimes, Americans do not all think the same way about their government. But some people do think the same way. Together, they are called a party. Each party wants the government to do many different things. So they pick people to try to become part of the government. They want these people to



get the jobs of president and other members of government.

In 1796, the parties were the Federalists and the Republicans. The Federalists wanted a very strong federal government. They thought that representatives should have a good education. Then they would know how to make the best laws for all Americans. Many Federalists lived in New England and on the Atlantic coast. Many of them were rich.

The Republicans did not want such a strong federal government. They wanted strong state governments. They thought that the people could vote for good representatives. Many Republicans were farmers in the middle and southern states.

The parties also did not think the same way about the war in Europe. The Federalists wanted England to win the war against France. The Republicans wanted France to win the war against England. But President Washington and many Americans did not want to fight in any more wars.

Washington was president for eight years. He did not think that a man should be president for more than eight years. In 1796, Americans had to vote for the next president, vice president, and members of Congress. The Federalists wanted John Adams to be president and Thomas Pinckney to be vice president. The Republicans wanted Thomas Jefferson to be president and Aaron Burr to be vice president. Americans voted for electors. Then the electors voted.

In 1797, John Adams became the new president. He was a Federalist. Thomas Jefferson became the vice president. He was a Republican. These men did not think the same way about government. But they had to work together.