**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

European explorers came to the Americas for glory, wealth, and adventure; many of the settlers who followed also sought adventure, while others came in pursuit of religious freedom and a fresh economic start for their families. In pursuit of opportunities in the “New World,” many newcomers overlooked the interests of the indigenous peoples that populated the continent. Pioneers pushed their way west onto tribal lands, cut farms out of the forests, and developed a strong sense of independence. Many settlers increasingly relied on the labor of African slaves.

By the mid-1700s, the colonists of the thirteen English colonies began to resent their home government’s policies, especially their lack of representation in the British Parliament. Declaring their independence from Britain and waging a Revolution to make independence a reality, the colonists struggled to establish the United States of America, the first modern constitutional republic. After fighting off the British a second time in the War of 1812, seventh President Andrew Jackson cleared the remaining indigenous peoples from their eastern lands, introduced the “common man” to politics, and told the nation to look west toward a new future—a vision later coined as the country’s “manifest destiny.”

At the same time that many of America’s white male citizens gained the right to participate in the electoral process for the first time, many of them, as well as white women and African Americans of both sexes, became heavily involved in reform movements, inspired in part by the Second Great Awakening. As America continued to expand, more people began questioning the morality of slavery: questions with answers only in the Civil War.

**ADDITIONAL LINKS**

- Exploring the Early Americas
- Evolution of the Virginia Colony, 1611-1624
- Religion and the Founding of the American Republic
- Alien and Sedition Acts
- Rivers, Edens, Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America

**SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

The complexity of several of the documents provided in the additional links may require teachers to select only key paragraphs for discussion or divide the documents up into chunks and have students work in groups to read through understand what each chunk is saying.

The four maps provided in this primary source set trace European, and later European-American conceptions of American waterways and landforms. Using these maps, have your students analyze why certain areas of the maps are blank and other portions are not, who designed the maps, and how the maps were intended to be used. Additionally, the maps show what territories were claimed by which nations. Have students look at the border areas and analyze the potential for conflict or cooperation: was there fighting here, was there trade here, and why?
THE LAND AND PEOPLE BEFORE EUROPEAN EXPLORATION AND THE AGE OF EXPLORATION (1400-1600)

Noort Rivier in Niew Neerlandt, [1639?]

De insulis nuper in mari Indico repertis [1494]

Jamestown, Virginia [1980-2006]

Ceremoniae barbaroru in incantationibus [1634]

Americae sive quartae orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio [1562]
**SETTLING THE COLONIES (1600-1750)**

Old wilderness road, High Bridge, Ky. [c1907]

**TEXTS**

- History of Plymouth plantation (1890)
- The “Starving Time,” Winter of 1609-1610
- Massachusetts (Look under the subheading “Constitution,” click on the link that reads “Colonial Charters, Grants and Related Documents: Massachusetts,” and search through the list of links to find the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, and the First Virginia Charter)

Order for Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for having put an end to the Spanish invasion. A proclamation... [1742]

A new map of Virginia, Mary-Land, and the improved parts of Pennsylvania & New Jersey. [1719]

Iroquois Indians [ca. 1914]
A new map of North America from the latest discoveries, [1763]

The Bostons paying the excise-man or tarring & feathering [1830]

Declaration of Independence: July 4th 1776 [1835-1856]

Texts
- Founding Documents Primary Source Set (For more sources and links to items, be sure to check out this more extensive resource.)
- Declaration of Independence
- Thomas Paine Writes “The American Crisis,” December 1776
- Powerful Polemics (Links to Thomas Paine’s Common Sense)
- Today in History: October 25 (Scroll down to the subheading “Abigail Smith Adams” to find excerpts of her letters or links to her letters)
- Phillis Wheatley
- Historian of the American Revolution (Link to writings of Mercy Otis Warren)
- Benjamin Franklin: In His Own Words

“Give me liberty, or give me death!” Patrick Henry delivering his great speech on the rights of the colonies, before the Virginia Assembly, convened at Richmond, March 23rd 1775, concluding with the above sentiment, which became the war cry of the revolution. [ca. 1876] For a recording of this speech, click here.
CREATING A NEW GOVERNMENT (1777-1789)

The United States of America, with the British possessions of Canada, Nova Scotia.

TEXTS

• The Articles of Confederation
• The U.S. Constitution: Continuity and Change in the Governing of the United States
• A bill of rights as provided in the ten original amendments to the constitution of the United States in force December 15, 1791. [n., p. 195-].
• The Federalist Papers
• Creating the United States: Right of States to Judge Constitutionality of Federal Laws (Includes excerpts from Thomas Jefferson’s “Kentucky Resolutions”)
• Creating the United States: Virginia Resolutions Oppose Alien and Sedition Acts

Paintings, Signing of Constitution by Howard C. Christy I [ca. 1920-1950]

James Madison, fourth President of the United States [1828]

Washington's farewell address [1913]

Alexander Hamilton [ca. 1900-1912]
WESTWARD EXPANSION (1790-1830) AND THE UNITED STATES ROLE IN THE WORLD’S STAGE (1789-1849)

The Star Spangled Banner [ca. 1913]

The capture of the Guerriere by the Constitution [ca. 1848]

John Ross, a Cherokee chief [ca. 1843]

King Andrew the First [1833]

Battle of New Orleans [ca. 1890]

TEXTS

- Fill Up the Canvas: Rivers of Words: Exploring with Lewis and Clark: Journals and Letters
- The New Nation (1780 - 1815) (Search through the alphabetized list for the link labeled “Marbury v. Madison, follow the link to the next site, and upon arrival click on an explore the link labeled “Marbury v. Madison (1803)”)
- The Star Spangled Banner
- Monroe Doctrine
- Rip Van Winkle and The legend of Sleepy Hollow (1899)
THE GROWTH OF THE REPUBLIC, SECTIONALISM, AND SLAVERY (1800-1850)

TEXTS

- **Seneca Falls Convention, July 1848** (Includes Declaration of Sentiments)
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
- **Today in History: November 26** (Scroll down to the subheading “Sojourner Truth” to find excerpts of her “Ain’t I a Woman” speech)
- **Roughing it (1891)**
- **A narrative of the life of David Crockett .. (1834)**
- **Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave / written by himself.**
- **Uncle Tom's cabin; or, Life among the lowly (1853)**
- **Full text of "The Lincoln-Douglas debates"**
- **Dred Scott v. Sandford** (Taney’s decision can be found my clicking on the first link in the main text)

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CITATIONS: Pre-Columbian America to the United States in 1850

Teachers: Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students. We have followed the Chicago Manual of Style format, one of the formats recommended by the Library of Congress, for each entry below, minus the access date. The access date for each of these entries is 9/5/14.


“Order for Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for having put an end to the Spanish invasion. A proclamation ... Given under my hand and seal, this 24th day of July at Frederica in Georgia, Anno Domini 1742. Signed by James Oglethorpe.” Broadside New York Gazette: 1742. From the Library of Congress: Printed Ephemera Collection. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+10203700))


Today in History: October 25. Special Presentation. From Library of Congress, American Memory. [link]


Chambers, Irene et al. *Partial Transcriptions*. Special Presentation. From the Library of Congress, Benjamin Franklin: In His Own Words. [link]

"Give me liberty, or give me death!" Patrick Henry delivering his great speech on the rights of the colonies, before the Virginia Assembly, convened at Richmond, March 23rd 1775, concluding with the above sentiment, which became the war cry of the revolution.” Illustration. New York: Currier and Ives, c. 1876. From Library of Congress, *Prints and Photographs Division*. [link]


A bill of rights as provided in the ten original amendments to the constitution of the United States in force December 15, 1791. [n. p. 195-]. Manuscript. 1950. From Library of Congress, American Memory. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28rbpe+24404400%29%29


Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1849. From Library of Congress, The Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, ca. 1600-1925 [Link](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbcbbib:@field%28NUMBER+@od1%28lhbcb+25385%29%29%29)


“Am I not a man and a brother?” Woodcut. From Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division. [Link](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661312/)

“Sojourner Truth. I sell the shadow to support the substance.” Photograph. 1864. From Library of Congress, Rare Book And Special Collections Division. [Link](http://www.loc.gov/item/scsm000880/)


Stuart, C. “Colonel Crockett.” Illustration. c.1839. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. [Link](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93511184/)