The Americans (Reconstruction to the 21st Century)

Chapter 3: TELESCOPING THE TIMES  The Growth of a Young Nation

CHAPTER OVERVIEW In the first half of the 1800s, the United States grows—adding land and people. The economy grows throughout the nation, but the different regions develop varied ways of life and attitudes.

Section 1: The Jeffersonian Era

MAIN IDEA During the presidencies of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe, the country grew in both size and prestige.

Thomas Jefferson won a close and bitter election in 1800 to become president. Jefferson wanted to make the federal government smaller. At the same time, the Supreme Court acted to increase its power. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the opinion in a critical decision, Marbury v. Madison. This established the principle of judicial review, which granted the Supreme Court authority to decide whether a law was allowed by the Constitution.

Jefferson expanded American territory. He bought the vast Louisiana Territory from France. The land stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The purchase doubled the size of the United States. Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore this territory.

During Jefferson’s two terms as president, Britain and France fought a war. Both sides threatened American merchant ships. The British also seized sailors from American ships and forced them to join the British navy. In addition, the British helped Native Americans who fought settlers in the West. Anger against Britain rose. Finally, in 1812, Congress declared war on Great Britain.
In 1814, the Treaty of Ghent ended the war but created no clear winner. The war had important results, though. The Federalist party died out. The war also led Americans to develop their own industries. Finally, it showed that the United States was truly independent of Britain.

Americans felt strong national pride in the years after the War of 1812. The nation obtained Florida from Spain. In 1823, President James Monroe warned European nations not to interfere with any nation in the Americas. This foreign policy statement became known as the Monroe Doctrine.

**Section 2 : The Age of Jackson**

**MAIN IDEA** During a time of growing sectionalism, Andrew Jackson's election in 1828 ushered in a new era of popular democracy.

The New England and Middle Atlantic states began to develop new industries. In the Northwest Territory, farmers thrived. In the South, farmers raised cotton. As the demand for cotton grew, slavery spread in the South. Meanwhile, Northern states gradually abolished slavery.

Henry Clay tried to unite the sections with a plan for economic development called the American System. A tariff on imported goods helped American industries grow. The creation of a national bank made a national currency available. The nation built new canals and roads making it easier to move people and goods across the country.

Leaders debated whether new states should allow slavery or not. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 seemed to settle the issue by allowing slavery in the Louisiana Territory south of the 36° 30’ north latitude line.

In 1828, Andrew Jackson became president. His presidential style made him very popular with common people. This popularity became important as the right to vote was expanded to include more people.
In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which forced Native Americans out of the Southeast. The Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional. Jackson defied the Court, which could not enforce its ruling. The Cherokees were the last to move west.

Southern leaders opposed tariffs (taxes on imported goods passed by Congress in 1832). South Carolina passed a law declaring the tariff null and void in that state. Jackson threatened to send the army to enforce federal law. A compromise prevented violence, but tensions remained. Another conflict emerged over the national bank. Jackson won, and the bank went out of existence. This contributed to an economic collapse that hit the nation in 1837.

Section 3: Manifest Destiny

MAIN IDEA Through settlement and war, the United States greatly expanded its boundaries during the mid-1800s.

Americans began to speak of manifest destiny—the belief that the United States was meant to expand from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. People moved west in search of economic opportunity. Meanwhile the U.S. government made treaties with Native Americans that it did not honor.

Trails brought traders to New Mexico and settlers to Oregon. Thousands of Mormons moved to Utah. In 1846, Britain agreed to give its share of the Oregon country to the United States.

The Mexican government invited Americans to settle in Texas, which was then a part of Mexico. Tension grew between the settlers and the Mexican government. In 1836, Texas won its independence. After nine years as an independent republic, Texas entered the Union in 1845.
Some Americans wanted to annex Mexico’s northern regions. But Mexico refused to sell the land. Finally, President James K. Polk persuaded Congress to declare war on Mexico, starting the Mexican-American War. The United States won the war, and through the peace treaty the United States gained all of present-day California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and parts of three other states.

Soon after the war ended, gold was discovered in California. Thousands of people streamed west in the gold rush, hoping to make their fortune.

Section 4: The Market Revolution

MAIN IDEA Inventions and economic developments in the early 19th century helped transform American society.

In the first half of the 1800s, people increasingly bought goods rather than made what they needed. This was known as the market revolution. New inventions helped fuel economic growth. The telegraph allowed quick communication over long distances. Steam-powered ships and railroads helped move people and goods farther and faster.

New inventions helped the farmers of the Midwest, too. The steel plow helped them prepare the soil for seeds. The reaper helped them harvest grain. Southerners continued to rely on slave labor to grow cotton, rice, and tobacco.

The rise of factories changed the nature of work. Early textile mills hired young women to work. They worked long hours in hot, noisy buildings. Sometimes workers organized to fight for better working conditions.

Immigrants continued to come to the United States in search of opportunity. About 1.3 million people came from Ireland between 1845 and 1854. Most settled in eastern cities despite the prejudice they faced. Many of the immigrant workers contributed to the growth of trade unions. The court case Commonwealth v. Hunt (1842) protected the workers’ right to strike.
Section 5: Reforming American Society

MAIN IDEA Throughout the mid-19th century, men and women who saw problems with American society embarked on a widespread effort to solve them.

In the early 1800s, Americans experienced a rise in religious sentiment known as the Second Great Awakening. This movement emphasized emotional individual conversion. Transcendentalists and Unitarians stressed reason and the dignity of the individual. The religious revival touched African Americans, too. To enslaved people, the message of Christianity offered hope for freedom.

These trends prompted new calls for social reform. Abolition—the effort to end slavery—was an important reform movement. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, eloquently spoke and wrote about the evils of slavery. Slaves worked long, hard hours. Many bitterly resented their treatment. Some, like Nat Turner, rebelled. These actions frightened slave owners, who passed harsh slave laws and argued against abolition.

Many women were active in social-reform movements such as abolition and temperance while others worked to improve education for women. In 1848, female reformers met in New York at the Seneca Falls Convention. They approved a statement that demanded equal rights for women.