Chapter 10: The Jefferson Era, 1800-1816

Section 1: Jefferson Takes Office

Main Idea: When Jefferson became president in 1801, his party replaced Federalist programs with its own.

In the presidential election of 1800, there was a tie between two Democratic–Republican candidates, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. According to the Constitution, the House of Representatives had to choose between them. Members of the House voted 36 times before electing Jefferson. Burr became vice president.

Thomas Jefferson was a skilled violinist, horseman, amateur scientist, and architect. He helped plan Washington, D.C. His book collection became the core of the Library of Congress.

As president, Jefferson tried to unite Americans by promoting a common way of life. He wanted the United States to be a nation of independent farmers. Jefferson thought that the central government should have less power than it did under the Federalists. At Jefferson’s request, Congress let the Alien and Sedition Acts end and also ended many taxes passed by the Federalists. In addition, Jefferson worked to reduce public debt.

Jefferson had less power over the courts. Under the Judiciary Act of 1801, John Adams had appointed as many Federalist judges as possible. Adams also appointed Federalist John Marshall as Chief Justice. During the 30-plus years that Marshall served, the Supreme Court upheld federal authority and strengthened the federal courts.

James Madison, Jefferson’s Secretary of State, refused to give a man named William Marbury a job promised him by the previous administration. In the case known as Marbury versus Madison, John Marshall ruled against Marbury and also declared a law
unconstitutional. This established the principle of judicial review—the power of the Supreme Court to decide exactly what the Constitution means.

**Section 2: The Louisiana Purchase and Exploration**

**Main Idea:** Jefferson purchased the Louisiana territory in 1803 and doubled the size of the United States.

In the 1800s, thousands of settlers moved westward. An important issue was their use of the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans to send goods to east coast markets.

In 1800, Spain agreed to return the Louisiana Territory to France. But first, in 1802, Spain closed New Orleans to U.S. ships. Westerners responded by calling for war against Spain and France. When Jefferson offered to buy New Orleans, France offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory. On April 30, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was approved for $15 million.

Jefferson chose Captain Meriwether Lewis to explore the Louisiana Territory. Lewis chose Lieutenant William Clark, a skilled mapmaker and outdoorsman, to recruit volunteers for the trip. Their journey became known as the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Lewis and Clark set out in the summer of 1803. In May 1804, the explorers headed up the Missouri River. They spent the following winter with the Mandan Indians in what is now North Dakota. In the spring of 1805, the expedition set out again and was joined by Sacagawea—a Shoshone Indian woman whose language skills and knowledge of geography were invaluable.

The explorers crossed the Rocky Mountains and journeyed to the Columbia River, which led them to the Pacific Ocean. In 1806, they returned to the East, bringing back valuable scientific and geographic information.
In 1806, Zebulon Pike led an expedition to explore southern Louisiana and find the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. He returned with important descriptions of the Red River and the valley of the Rio Grande.

**Section 3: Problems with Foreign Powers**

**Main Idea:** Jefferson tried to avoid involvement in the problems of other nations.

For years after the French Revolution, Europe was at war. For awhile, the United States managed to stay out of these conflicts. By 1805, however, the British began to clamp down on U.S. shipping. They did not want Americans to provide their enemies with food and supplies. Then France made its own laws to control foreign shipping.

Britain also interfered with U.S. shipping by impressment—the kidnapping of American sailors to work on British ships. In 1807, the British ship *Leopard* attacked the American ship *Chesapeake*. Three U.S. sailors were killed.

Jefferson asked Congress to pass trade laws to punish Britain and France. Congress passed the Embargo Act of 1807 to stop all foreign trade. The act prohibited U.S. ships from sailing to foreign ports. It also closed American ports to British ships.

Jefferson’s policy was more harmful to Americans than to the British and French. Congress repealed the embargo in 1809. That year Madison became the next president. He reopened trade with all countries except France and Britain. Madison’s policy was not effective either.

After the Battle of Fallen Timbers, thousands of white settlers moved into Ohio and Indiana. In September 1809, the governor of the Indiana Territory signed the Treaty of Fort Wayne. Chiefs of the Miami, Delaware, and Potawatomi tribes agreed to sell over three million acres to the United States. Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief, said the land could not be sold without the consent of all tribes. He believed that the tribes needed to work together to stop the loss of land.
Many Native Americans began to follow Tecumseh and form an alliance. Then, in November 1811, U.S. forces defeated the Shawnee at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Tecumseh and his followers fled to Canada, where the British welcomed them. Americans became increasingly angry over British interference. Westerners called War Hawks demanded that Congress declare war on Britain. On June 18, 1812, war was declared.

Section 4: The War of 1812

Main Idea: Angered by Britain’s interference in the nation’s affairs, the United States went to war.

The War of 1812 had two main phases. From 1812 to 1814, Britain concentrated on its war against France. After Britain defeated France in 1814, British leaders turned their attention to the United States.

When the war began, the United States military was weak. Fortunately, the navy’s warships were the fastest afloat. The most important U.S. naval victory took place on Lake Erie. In September 1813, a British force attacked American ships commanded by Oliver Hazard Perry. Perry won the battle. Then General William Henry Harrison defeated the British at the Battle of the Thames. This victory ended the British threat in the Northwest and also claimed the life of Tecumseh.

The British attacked Washington, D.C. There, they burned the White House. Then they attacked Fort McHenry at Baltimore. A Washington lawyer named Francis Scott Key watched the all-night battle. At dawn, Key saw the fort’s flag still flying. Inspired, he wrote the U.S. national anthem.

In the North, an American fleet defeated the British in the Battle of Lake Champlain in September 1814. In the South, the British attacked New Orleans but were defeated by United States General Andrew Jackson. The Battle of New Orleans was unnecessary. Two weeks earlier, officials had signed the Treaty of Ghent ending the war. Slow mails had delayed the news.
The Treaty of Ghent showed that the war had no clear winner. Nevertheless, there were four important consequences. One: patriotism increased; two: the war weakened Native Americans; three: Americans were forced to make many of their own goods, causing United States manufacturing to grow; and four: the United States proved it could defend itself.