**TIMELINE: 1800-1860**

accompanying the Seminar Toolbox

**THE TRIUMPH of NATIONALISM ♦ THE NATION DIVIDING**

From Nationalism to Sectionalism in the United States, 1815-1850

National Humanities Center

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**1800**

**SECOND CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 5.3 million, including one million African Americans, of whom 900,000 are enslaved.

Federal capital moves from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

Virginia bans gathering of slaves at sunset for religious worship.

First recorded camp meeting revival is held in Logan County, Kentucky.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr (Democratic-Republican) defeat John Adams and Charles Pinckney (Federalist).

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**1801**

Jefferson-Burr tie forces election into House of Representatives (since candidates were not nominated separately for president and vice-president); Jefferson is elected in 36 ballots.

Tripoli declares war on U.S.; Jefferson sends naval ships to Mediterranean Sea.

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**1802**

Alien and Sedition Acts are allowed to expire by Congress.

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**1803**

**LOUISIANA TERRITORY** is purchased from France for $15 million.

Louis and Clark expedition begins in St. Louis, Missouri.

Supreme Court declares its right to review constitutionality of acts of Congress (judicial review) in *Marbury v. Madison*.

Ohio enters Union as 17th state.

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**1804**

Twelfth Amendment is ratified, providing for separate election of president and vice president.

Aaron Burr kills Alexander Hamilton in a pistol duel.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Jefferson is re-elected president and George Clinton elected vice president.

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**1805**

Lewis and Clark expedition reaches the Pacific Ocean.

Barbary War with Tripoli ends after U.S. troops capture Darna.

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**1806**

Lewis and Clark expedition ends with successful return to St. Louis.

Zebulon Pike discovers mountain later known as Pike’s Peak (CO).

N. Webster publishes *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*.

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**1807**

Importation of African slaves is banned by Congress.

Congress passes Embargo Act in response to British and French interference with U.S. trade.

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**1808**

U.S. ships and cargoes in European ports are confiscated by France.

Rev. Richard Allen publishes *Confession of John Joyce*.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** James Madison and George Clinton are elected president and vice president (Democratic-Republican).
1809 First black Baptist church is founded in Philadelphia.

1810 **THIRD CENSUS**: U.S. population totals 7.2 million, including 1.4 million African Americans, of whom 1.2 million are enslaved. Population west of Appalachian Mountains is 1 million.

1811 Construction of Cumberland Road begins in Maryland.

1812 **WAR OF 1812** begins as U.S. declares war on Great Britain over issues of borders, trade, freedom of the seas, and the rights of neutrals. Indians under Tecumseh fight on British side.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**: James Madison and Elbridge Gerry are elected president and vice president (Democratic-Republican).

Louisiana enters Union as 18th state.

1813 U.S. defeats British at the Battle of the Thames (in which Tecumseh is killed). British burn Buffalo, New York.


1815 British are defeated at the Battle of New Orleans (two weeks after Treaty of Ghent is signed). American settlers begin large migration to the “Old Southwest” (Alabama and Mississippi).

1816 Congress passes the first tariff that is intended to protect U.S. industry rather than raise revenue. Second Bank of the United States begins its twenty-year charter.

Indiana enters Union as 19th state.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**: James Monroe and Daniel Tompkins are elected president and vice-president (Democratic-Republican).

1817 Construction of Erie Canal begins to connect the Great Lakes and the Ohio and Mississippi valleys with the Hudson River (and the Atlantic Ocean).

Seminoles attack white settlers in Florida and Georgia.

Mississippi enters Union as 20th state.

William Cullen Bryant publishes “To a Waterfowl.”

1818 Connecticut abolishes property ownership as a requirement for voting.

Illinois enters Union as 21st state.

1819 Supreme Court upholds right of federal government to charter a national bank, thus affirming that it holds “implied powers” beyond those stated in the Constitution (*McCulloch v. Maryland*).

U.S. acquires Florida from Spain by treaty; Andrew Jackson becomes military governor in 1821. Alabama enters union as 22nd state.

1820 **FOURTH CENSUS**: U.S. population totals 10 million, including 1.7 million African Americans, of whom 1.5 million are enslaved. Population west of Appalachian Mts. is 2.2 million.

**MISSOURI COMPROMISE** is passed by Congress. Maine is admitted as a free state (23rd) and Missouri as a slave state (24th). Slavery is banned in Louisiana Territory north of 36°30’.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**: Monroe and Tompkins are re-elected president and vice pres.
1821  Santa Fe Trail is opened from Independence, MO, to Santa Fe, NM.
First American settlers (300 families) arrive in Texas.
Massachusetts and New York end property qualifications for voting.
First public high school opens in Boston.
First American tunnel (450 ft.) opens in Pennsylvania.

1822  Cotton mills with women workers begin production in Lowell, Mass.
Slave rebellion led by Denmark Vesey is crushed in Charleston, SC.
American Colonization Soc. establishes Monrovia (Liberia) to promote emigration of free blacks.

1823  **MONROE DOCTRINE** announced: U.S. warns Europe not to interfere in Western Hemisphere affairs and proclaims intention to remain uninvolved in European wars.
James Fenimore Cooper begins publishing the Leatherstocking Tales series with *The Pioneer*.

1824  **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**: None of the four candidates receives majority of electoral votes; John Calhoun is elected vice president (Democratic-Republican).
U.S. signs treaty with Russia setting 54°40' as southern limit of Russian territory.


1826  Elias Boudinot, a Cherokee, delivers speech “An Address to the Whites.”
Hezekiah Niles publishes “Great National Interests” in *Niles’ Register*.
John Adams & Thomas Jefferson die on July 4, the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

1827  California becomes a Mexican province.

1828  “Tariff of Abominations” is passed by Congress to intense hostility from Southern states.
**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**: Democratic Party is established; Andrew Jackson is elected as first Democratic president; John Calhoun is re-elected vice president (Democratic-Republican).

1829  Andrew Jackson introduces spoils system into national politics.
David Walker, a free black, publishes *An Appeal to the Colored People of America*.
Slavery is abolished in Mexico.

1830  **FIFTH CENSUS**: U.S. population totals 13 million, including 2.3 million African Americans, of whom 2 million are enslaved. Population west of the Appalachian Mountains is 3 million, more than 25% of the U.S. population.
**INDIAN REMOVAL BILL** is passed by Congress to forcibly resettle southeastern Indian tribes to territory west of the Mississippi River.
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) is founded by Joseph Smith in New York.
*Godey’s Lady’s Book* begins monthly publication (continues until 1898).

1831  **NAT TURNER’S REBELLION** (Virginia): about 60 white people killed. Turner is executed.
William Lloyd Garrison founds first abolitionist periodical *The Liberator* in Boston.
Reaper is invented by Cyrus McCormick (patented in 1834).
1832 Andrew Jackson vetoes bill renewing charter of the Second National Bank of the U.S.
South Carolina passes Ordinance of Nullification to void the tariff acts of 1828 and 1832.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Jackson is re-elected president and Martin Van Buren elected vice president (Democratic).

1833 Jackson’s “Bank War” begins when he orders funds withdrawn from the National Bank and deposited into “pet” state banks.
Force Bill is passed by Congress, giving Jackson power to use the military to enforce tariff laws.
Slavery is abolished in the British Empire.

1834 Andrew Dorr issues “An Address to the People of Rhode Island.”

1835 **TEXAS REVOLUTION** begins when Mexico rejects Texans’ petition for statehood, Gold is found on Cherokee land in Georgia; Cherokees are forced to cede land.
Seminole Indians in Florida begin seven-year war to resist forced removal to the West.
Alexis de Tocqueville publishes first volume of *Democracy in America* (second in 1840).
Harriet Jacobs goes into hiding in Edenton, North Carolina, for seven years.

1836 Gag rule is passed by Congress to prevent abolitionist petitions from being considered.
Texas declares independence from Mexico; siege of the Alamo.
Arkansas enters Union as 25th state.
Emerson publishes *Nature*; Transcendental Club holds first meeting in Boston.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Martin Van Buren (Dem.) is elected president. Richard Johnson (Dem.) is elected vice president by the Senate since no candidate received an electoral majority.

1837 Panic of 1837 leads to collapse of many early labor unions.
Angelina and Sarah Grimké begin abolitionist talks to women’s groups.
Anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic organization is formed (Native American Assn.).
Michigan enters Union as 26th state.

1838 “**TRAIL OF TEARS**”: Cherokees are forcibly removed from Georgia to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.
Routes later known as Underground Railroad begin to be established.
James Fenimore Cooper publishes *The American Democrat*.
Caroline Gilman publishes *Recollections of a Southern Matron*.

1839 Slaves aboard slave ship *L’Amistad* rebel. Slaves are freed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1841 and returned to Africa.
First “normal” school opens with a teacher training program (Mass.).

1840 **SIXTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 17 million, including 3 million African Americans, of whom 2.5 million are enslaved.
Population west of the Appalachian Mountains is 5 million, more than one third of the U.S. population.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** William Henry Harrison and John Tyler are elected president and vice president (Whig Party).
1841  Harrison dies after one month in office; John Tyler becomes president. 
Catherine Beecher publishes *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. 
Emerson publishes *Essays, First and Second Series*, including “Self-Reliance.”

1842  Dorr’s Rebellion in Rhode Island leads to liberalized voting requirements. 
Supreme Court rules that state laws prohibiting the capture and return of 
fugitive slaves are unconstitutional (*Prigg v. Pennsylvania*).  
First wagon train reaches Oregon Territory via the Oregon Trail.  
Massachusetts enacts ten-hour work day for children under 12.  
Charles C. Jones publishes *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the U.S.*

1843  Massachusetts passes law forbidding state officials from catching fugitive slaves. 
Sojourner Truth begins delivering abolitionist speeches across the nation. 

1844  Methodist Church divides into northern and southern sections over the issue of slavery. 
Morse sends first telegraph message (from Baltimore to Washington, DC):  
“What hath God wrought!”

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** James Polk and George Dallas elected 
president and vice president (Democratic Party).

1845  Frederick Douglass publishes *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*.  
Florida enters Union as 27th state; Texas enters Union as 28th state.  
Thoreau moves into a cabin on Walden Pond for two years and two months.  
Baptist Convention splits over the issue of slavery into northern and southern sections.  
Irish potato famine begins; 1.5 million Irish emigrate to U.S. in the next decade.

1846  **MEXICAN WAR** begins; Congress declares war after Mexican troops 
Michigan becomes first state to abolish capital punishment.  
Smithsonian Institution is created by Congress.  
Iowa enters Union as 29th state.

1847  U.S. forces defeat Mexican army at Veracruz and Mexico City. 
Mormons arrive in Utah and establish the community Deseret.

1848  **MEXICAN WAR** ends officially by treaty.  
California Gold Rush begins.  
Wisconsin enters Union as 30th state.  
Women’s Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, New York  
German immigrants begin to emigrate to the U.S. after crop failures 
and failed revolutions.  
John Humphrey Noyes establishes the Perfectionist Community 
in Oneida, New York.  

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Zachary Taylor and Millard Filmore elected president and 
vice president (Whig Party).  
France abolishes slavery in its West Indies colonies.
1849  Thoreau publishes “Civil Disobedience.”

1850  **SEVENTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 23.2 million, including 3.5 million African Americans, of whom 3 million are enslaved.

**COMPROMISE OF 1850** allows residents of New Mexico and Utah territories to permit or ban slavery, admits California as a free state (31st), ends the slave trade (but not slavery) in the District of Columbia, and enacts a stricter fugitive slave law requiring citizens in free states to turn in runaway slaves.

President Taylor dies; Millard Fillmore becomes president.

1851  John Calhoun delivers “A Disquisition on Government.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne publishes “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (written 1832).

1852  Frederick Douglass delivers speech “What to a Slave Is the Fourth of July?”

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom’s Cabin.*

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Franklin Pierce and William King are elected president and vice president (Democratic Party).

1853  Sara Payton Willis Parton publishes *Fern Leaves from Fanny’s Portfolio.*

1854  **KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT** passed by Congress, repealing the Missouri Compromise and allowing Kansas and Nebraska settlers to decide status of slavery in the territories.

Anti-immigrant Know-Nothing Party is founded.

James G. Baldwin publishes *Flush Times in Mississippi and Alabama.*

George Fitzhugh publishes *Sociology for the South; or, The Failure of Free Society.*

Thoreau publishes *Walden; or, Life in the Woods.*

1855  **“BLEEDING KANSAS”**: Intense local warfare erupts between pro- and anti-slavery settlers.

Walt Whitman anonymously publishes *Leaves of Grass.*

1856  **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** James Buchanan and John Breckenridge are elected president and vice president (Democratic Party).

1857  **DRED SCOTT DECISION:** Supreme Court holds that Congress has no power to regulate slavery in the territories, that African Americans are not citizens, and that residence in free territory does not confer freedom on enslaved persons.

1858  Minnesota enters Union as 32nd state.

Emancipation of serfs begins in Russia.

1859  Oregon enters Union as 33rd state.

1860  **SIXTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 31 million, about half of whom live west of the Appalachian Mts. Population includes 4.5 million African Americans, of whom 4 million are enslaved.

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:** Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin are elected president and vice president (Republican).

South Carolina secedes from the Union, the first state to do so.