

L. The Founding Era (1789-1823)

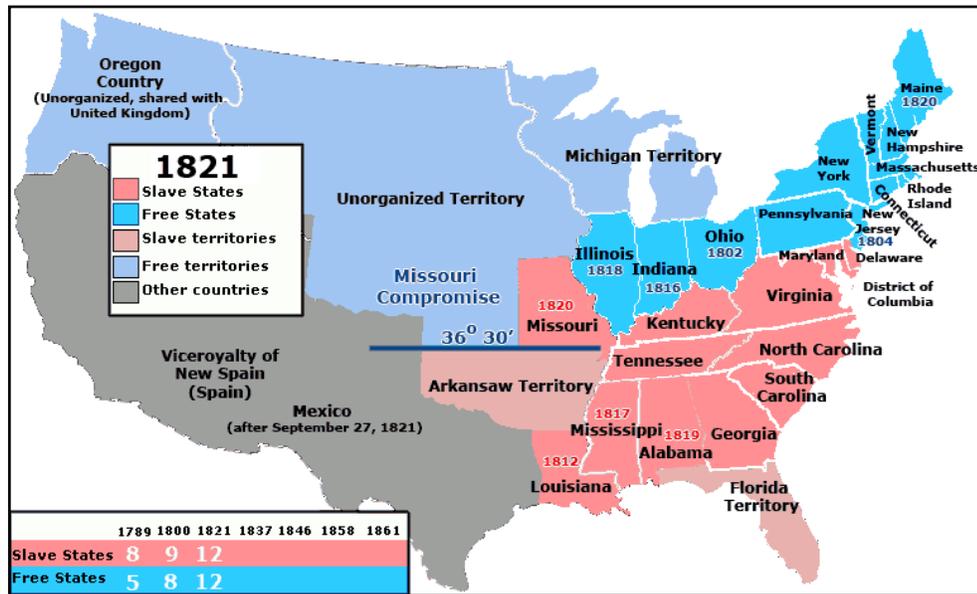
1. Once the constitution was accepted by Americans, the challenge for the Founding Fathers was to *keep* America independent.
2. The first presidents, George Washington (1789-1797) and John Adams (1797-1801) kept American *neutral* during the French Revolution.
3. Then Thomas Jefferson (president from 1801-09) warned Napoleon, who had taken over France after its failed revolution, that America would ally with Britain if they became enemies. This convinced Napoleon to sell the Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803. This *Louisiana Purchase* doubled the territory of the United States.
4. James Madison served as president next, from 1809-17, and had to go to war against Great Britain once again. American sailors were being enslaved by the British navy, which refused to recognize their American citizenship—a policy known as “pressing” men into service. Madison had to defend the rights of Americans.
5. The final key event of early American independence was the Monroe Doctrine of president James Monroe (president from 1817-25), which finalized America’s political separation from its mother continent.
6. The Founding Fathers had fundamentally succeeded in securing the rights of Americans.



The states highlighted in bright green now occupy the territory acquired via the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which helped avoid a political entanglement with France and helped America grow into one of the largest countries in the world.

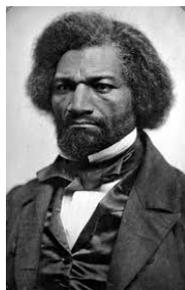
M. Abolitionism and the Growth and Decline of the Union (1820-1861)

1. The main negative aspect of the constitutional bargain that had made the United States possible—the acceptance of slavery—was not overcome by the Founders.
2. In 1808 the United States abolished the *slave trade*. This was a key step forward, but it did not stop slavery itself.
3. During Monroe’s presidency, a new compromise was attempted to prevent the spread of slavery known as the “Missouri Compromise” of 1820.
 - a) Missouri was applying to join the Union as a slave state.
 - b) Northerners were angry and wanted a new free state, Maine, to be created by separating it from Massachusetts.
 - c) In addition, most of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 was made off limits to slavery.
4. Some Americans refused to accept the continuation of slavery on moral grounds. These supporters of natural rights insisted that slavery was contrary to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and their push to abolish slavery once and for all ranks them as great heroes in American history.
 - a) William Lloyd Garrison, a New England journalist, started it all, with a newspaper called *The Liberator* in 1831.
 - b) Garrison was joined by an escaped slave, Frederick Douglass, who became a fantastic public speaker. His speech, “*What To the Slave is the 4th of July?*” uses the principles of the Founding Fathers to reject the inheritance of slavery.



Most of the Louisiana Territory (and the new Oregon Country) would be off limits to slavery because of the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

- c) Among the many heroes of this phase of history is Harriet Tubman, also an escaped slave, who became one of the organizers of the “Underground Railroad” — a network of people in the North who helped escaped slaves make their way north to Canada.
- d) Another great contributor to the cause of abolitionism was Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which dramatized the evils of slavery.
5. Because of abolitionists, the feeling of national unity declined. (Northerners didn’t want to put up with Southerners, and vice versa!)
6. When Texas joined the Union after breaking away from Mexico, and the Mexican-American War followed, another massive expansion of territory occurred.
7. Because of the Missouri Compromise, slavery would be allowed in most of this new area, but when California joined the union as a free state in 1850, slaveholders demanded the opening of still more territory to slavery. The *final* compromise was made: the “Compromise of 1850,” in which all territories were opened to slavery as long as settlers within any territory wished it to be so democratically. (This was known as “popular sovereignty.”)
8. A violent contest to determine the fate of Kansas was the first episode of conflict between the two great parts of American culture, which finally led to the Civil War.



From left to right, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe were leaders of the abolitionist movement (1831-61).