

A satellite-style image of North America, showing the continent in green and brown, with white snow on the northern mountains and Canada. The text is overlaid on this image.

THE WAR AND AFTER WAR PERIODS

Plan to the lecture

1. The Independence war
2. The Civil war
3. Reconstruction 1865-1877
4. The economy
5. The Great Depression in Outline
6. America and other countries

Commentary

The Democratic Party – organized during the electoral campaigns in 1828 and got its contemporary name in the 30's of the 19th century. The symbol of the party is the donkey.

Republicans – stands for members of the Republican Party. The party was established in 1854 as a union of big capitalists of the North with the farmers who lived outside the Southern States and average bourgeois of small towns.

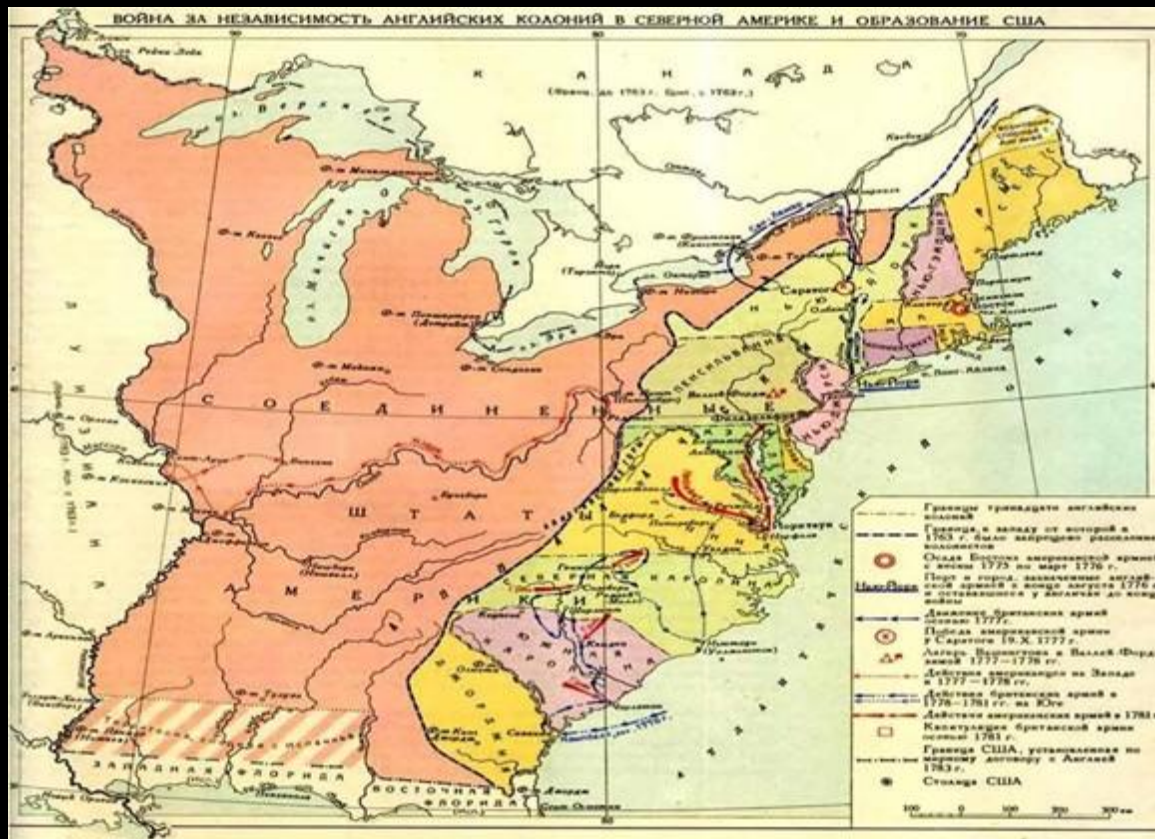
an ordinance of secession – (secession of Southern States from the Union) a treaty or enactment of statutory principal of withdrawal from a political organization or alliance. As exemplified by the Southern States which broke away from the United States in 1861, causing the great Civil War.

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) – President of the Confederation of the Southern slavery states (the Confederacy).

The Confederate Congress (1861–1865) – formed by the original six states which seceded from the Union (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and Louisiana), which elected Jefferson Davis as president and Alexander Stephens as Vice President. The Congress later added the states of Texas, Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas and North Carolina. The capital was Richmond, Va. The congress acted in similar fashion to that of the United States in its legislative and judicial bodies.

1. THE INDEPENDENCE WAR

The British government took a series of measures that set the States astrir (1764 Revenue Act increasing taxes on sugar imported into America; 1765 Stamp Act obliging the colonies to buy from the British government stamps to be placed on legal documents and newspapers).





The American Revolution took thousands of human lives but the patriots were unbending.

In order to fight inflationary pressures, the Roosevelt administration introduced a number of constraining measures, such as, for example, tax withholding which imposed heavy taxes on the wealthy.

2. THE CIVIL WAR

By 1850, slavery in the South was well over 200 years old, and had become an integral part of the basic economy of the region. In 15 southern and border states, the black population was approximately half as large as the white, while in the north it was an insignificant fraction.

From the middle 1840s, the issue of slavery overshadowed everything else in American politics. The south, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and beyond, was a relatively compact political unit that agreed on all fundamental policies affecting cotton culture and slavery - the majority of southern planters came to regard slavery as necessary and permanent.



In the election of 1860 the Democratic Party¹ split in half. Political leaders in the North and in the South tragically misjudged each other.

As the war developed the southern armies moved into heavier fighting. Most of the combat centered in Virginia. Meanwhile the southern economy was developing along new lines. A large bureaucracy sprang up to administer the military and economic operations. Over 70,000 civilians were needed to run the Confederate war machine. The mushrooming bureaucracy expanded the cities. New housing construction was stimulated. The traditionally agricultural South was also developing its industries in order to supply the army. Mass poverty descended on the South. Inflation became a major problem as prices rose by almost 7,000 per cent.

In August 1861 Congress passed its first confiscation act. The law confiscated all property used for “unsurrectionaiy purposes”. A second confiscation act – July 1862 – was much more drastic; it confiscated the property of all those who supported the rebellion, even those who merely resided in the South and paid Confederate taxes. Their slaves were “forever free of their servitude, and not again to be held as slaves”.

3. RECONSTRUCTION. 1865–1877

In 1869 the Ku-Klux-Klan added organized violence to the whites' resistance. Despite federal efforts to protect them, black people were intimidated at the polls, robbed of their earnings, beaten, or murdered. By the early 1870s the failure of the Reconstruction was apparent. The Military Reconstruction Act of 1867 called for new governments in the South; it barred from political office those Confederate leaders who were listed in the Fourteenth Amendment. But the law required no redistribution of land and guaranteed no basic changes in southern social standards.

Terrorism against blacks was widening. Nighttime visits, whippings, beatings, and murder became common.

The Klan's terror frightened many voters and weakened local party organization, but it did not stop Reconstruction. Throughout the South conventions met and drafted new constitutions. New governments were set up, and Republicans won majorities nearly everywhere. But they failed to break down the social structure or the distribution of wealth and of power. Freedmen were exploited during the Reconstruction as well. Without land of their own, they were dependent on white landowners. Then the retreat from Reconstruction began. The rights of black citizens were insecure. Under the new interpretation of the 15th Amendment blacks were actually denied suffrage on the grounds that they lacked education, property or a grandfather who had been qualified to vote before the Reconstruction Act. In 1872 Amnesty Act was adopted which pardoned the rebels. After 1877 thousands of blacks gathered up their possessions and migrated to Kansas.

4. THE ECONOMY

The United States developed into an urban industrial society after the Civil War, the reconciliation of wealth and public virtues became even more difficult.

After World War I the themes of wealth and democracy were reinforced by the expansion of mass communications. As a result of rapid industrialization, innovative advertising, and new distribution methods Americans promoted and spread the image of themselves overseas. America exported motion pictures to Europe, and American actors and actresses, supported by American furniture, dress, automobiles, and mannerisms, flooded Europe of the 1920s. Films and advertising in magazines showed how typical Americans were meant to look and interact. By 1929 image industries had become an American specialty/

5. THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN OUTLINE

The causes were the following: the agricultural sector was plagued with overproduction during the decade so that prices for farm products were declining; debts were mounting; there were bankruptcies, and small banks failures. Some industries, like coal, railroads, construction, and textiles were in distress long before 1929.

A great change took place with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president in March 1933. Roosevelt took active measures to stabilize banking and put right agricultural production by paying subsidies to farmers to reduce their acreage or plow under crops already in the field. He introduced a system of regulated prices for corn, cotton, wheat, rice, hogs, and dairy products. He also proposed a plan for public works and relief payments to the needed citizens. Fifteen major pieces of legislation were enacted within 100 days. As a result unemployment dropped from 13 million people in 1933 to 9 million in 1936. All these measures taken together were called the New Deal.

6. AMERICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

Soviet Union

America's hopes of expanding its foreign trade produced particular efforts by the administration to improve its diplomatic posture in two areas: the Soviet Union and Latin America. The United States and Russia had viewed each other with mistrust and even hostility since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the American government still had not officially recognized the Soviet regime by 1933.

In November 1933, therefore, Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov reached an agreement with the president in Washington. The Soviets would cease their propaganda efforts in the United States and protect American citizens in Russia; in return, the United States would recognize the communist regime.

By the end of 1934, the Soviet Union and the United States were once again viewing each other with considerable mistrust.

Japan

At 7:55 a.m. on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a wave of Japanese bombers attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor. A second wave came an hour later. Because the military commanders in Hawaii had taken no precautions against such an attack, allowing ships to remain bunched up defenselessly in the harbor and airplanes to remain parked in rows on airstrips, the results of the raid were catastrophic. Within two hours, the United States lost 8 battleships, 3 cruisers, 4 other vessels, 188 airplanes, and several vital shore installations. More than 2,000 soldiers and sailors died, and another 1,000 were injured. The Japanese suffered only light losses.

Within four hours, the Senate unanimously and approved a declaration of war against Japan. Three days later, Germany and Italy, Japan's European allies, declared war on the United States.

Germany

The United States had to cooperate with Britain and with the exiled “Free French” forces in the west; and it had to conciliate its new ally, the Soviet Union, which was engaged in a savage conflict with Hitler in the east.

America and the Holocaust

In the midst of this intensive fighting, the leaders of the American government found themselves confronted with one of history's great tragedies: the Nazi campaign to exterminate the Jews of Europe – the Holocaust.

The United States also resisted entreaties that it admits large numbers of the Jewish refugees attempting to escape the horrors of Europe.

One opportunity after another to assist the imperiled Jews was either ignored or rejected.

In fairness to American leaders, there was probably little they could have done to save the majority of Hitler's victims.

World War II had its most profound impact on American domestic life by ending at last the Great Depression. By the middle of 1941, the economic problems of the 1930s – unemployment, deflation, industrial sluggishness – had virtually vanished before the great wave of wartime industrial expansion.