

## Period 4: 1800 to 1848

**Overview: The new republic struggled to define and extend democratic ideals in the face of rapid economic, territorial, and demographic changes.**

**Key Concept 4.1: The United States developed the world's first modern mass democracy and celebrated a new national culture, while Americans sought to define the nation's democratic ideals and to reform its institutions to match them.**

I. The nation's transformation to a more participatory democracy was accompanied by continued debates over federal power, the relationship between the federal government and the states, the authority of different branches of the federal government, and the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens.

A. As various constituencies and interest groups coalesced and defined their agendas, various political parties, most significantly the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans in the 1790s and the Democrats and Whigs in the 1830s, were created or transformed to reflect and/or promote those agendas.

B. Supreme Court decisions sought to assert federal power over state laws and the primacy of the judiciary in determining the meaning of the Constitution.

C. With the acceleration of a national and international market economy, Americans debated the scope of government's role in the economy, while diverging economic systems meant that regional political and economic loyalties often continued to overshadow national concerns.

D. Many white Americans in the South asserted their regional identity through pride in the institution of slavery, insisting that the federal government should defend that institution.

II. Concurrent with an increasing international exchange of goods and ideas, larger numbers of Americans began struggling with how to match democratic political ideals to political institutions and social realities.

A. The Second Great Awakening, liberal social ideas from abroad, and Romantic beliefs in human perfectibility fostered the rise of voluntary organizations to promote religious and secular reforms, including abolition and women's rights.

B. Despite the outlawing of the international slave trade, the rise in the number of free African Americans in both the North and the South, and widespread discussion of various emancipation plans, the U.S. and many state governments continued to restrict African Americans' citizenship possibilities.

C. Resistance to initiatives for democracy and inclusion included proslavery arguments, rising xenophobia, anti-black sentiments in political and popular culture, and restrictive anti-Indian policies.

III. While Americans celebrated their nation's progress toward a unified new national culture that blended Old World forms with New World ideas, various groups of the nation's inhabitants developed distinctive cultures of their own.

A. A new national culture emerged, with various Americans creating art, architecture, and literature that combined European forms with local and regional cultural sensibilities.

B. Various groups of American Indians, women, and religious followers developed cultures reflecting their interests and experiences, as did regional groups and an emerging urban middle class.

C. Enslaved and free African Americans, isolated at the bottom of the social hierarchy, created communities and strategies to protect their dignity and their family structures, even as some launched abolitionist and reform movements aimed at changing their status.

**Key Concept 4.2: Developments in technology, agriculture, and commerce precipitated profound changes in U.S. settlement patterns, regional identities, gender and family relations, political power, and distribution of consumer goods.**

I. A global market and communications revolution, influencing and influenced by technological innovations, led to dramatic shifts in the nature of agriculture and manufacturing.

A. Innovations including textile machinery, steam engines, interchangeable parts, canals, railroads, and the telegraph, as well as agricultural inventions, both extended markets and brought efficiency to production for those markets.

B. Increasing numbers of Americans, especially women in factories and low-skilled male workers, no longer relied on semi-subsistence agriculture but made their livelihoods producing goods for distant markets, even as some urban entrepreneurs went into finance rather than manufacturing.

II. Regional economic specialization, especially the demands of cultivating southern cotton, shaped settlement patterns and the national and international economy.

A. Southern cotton furnished the raw material for manufacturing in the Northeast, while the growth in cotton production and trade promoted the development of national economic ties, shaped the international economy, and fueled the internal slave trade.

B. Despite some governmental and private efforts to create a unified national economy, most notably the American System, the shift to market production linked the North and the Midwest more closely than either was linked to the South.

C. Efforts to exploit the nation's natural resources led to government efforts to promote free and forced migration of various American peoples across the continent, as well as to competing ideas about defining and managing labor systems, geographical boundaries, and natural resources.

III. The economic changes caused by the market revolution had significant effects on migration patterns, gender and family relations, and the distribution of political power.

A. With the opening of canals and new roads into the western territories, native-born white citizens relocated westward, relying on new community systems to replace their old family and local relationships.

B. Migrants from Europe increased the population in the East and the Midwest, forging strong bonds of interdependence between the Northeast and the Old Northwest.

C. The South remained politically, culturally, and ideologically distinct from the other sections, while continuing to rely on its exports to Europe for economic growth.

D. The market revolution helped to widen a gap between rich and poor, shaped emerging middle and working classes, and caused an increasing separation between home and workplace, which led to dramatic transformations in gender and in family roles and expectations.

E. Regional interests continued to trump national concerns as the basis for many political leaders' positions on economic issues including slavery, the national bank, tariffs, and internal improvements.

**Key Concept 4.3: U.S. interest in increasing foreign trade, expanding its national borders, and isolating itself from European conflicts shaped the nation's foreign policy and spurred government and private initiatives.**

I. Struggling to create an independent global presence, U.S. policymakers sought to dominate the North American continent and to promote its foreign trade.

A. Following the Louisiana Purchase, the drive to acquire, survey, and open up new lands and markets led Americans into numerous economic, diplomatic, and military initiatives in the Western Hemisphere and Asia.

B. The U.S. sought dominance over the North American continent through a variety of means, including military actions, judicial decisions, and diplomatic efforts.

II. Various American groups and individuals initiated, championed, and/or resisted the expansion of territory and/or government powers.

A. With expanding borders came public debates about whether to expand and how to define and use the new territories.

B. Federal government attempts to assert authority over the states brought resistance from state governments in the North and the South at different times.

C. Whites living on the frontier tended to champion expansion efforts, while resistance by American Indians led to a sequence of wars and federal efforts to control American Indian populations.

III. The American acquisition of lands in the West gave rise to a contest over the extension of slavery into the western territories as well as a series of attempts at national compromise.

A. The 1820 Missouri Compromise created a truce over the issue of slavery that gradually broke down as confrontations over slavery became increasingly bitter.

B. As over-cultivation depleted arable land in the Southeast, slaveholders relocated their agricultural enterprises to the new Southwest, increasing sectional tensions over the institution of slavery and sparking a broad-scale debate about how to set national goals, priorities, and strategies.