

# AMERICA

*A Narrative History*

George Brown Tindall  
David E. Shi



FOURTH EDITION • VOLUME ONE

# AMERICA

A N A R R A T I V E  
H I S T O R Y

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FOURTH EDITION



VOLUME I

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GEORGE BROWN TINDALL  
DAVID E. SHI

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## PREFACE

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Just as history is never complete, neither is a historical textbook. We have learned much from the responses of readers and instructors to the first three editions of *America*. Perhaps the most important and reassuring lesson is that our original intention has proved valid: to provide a compelling narrative history of the American experience, a narrative animated by human characters, informed by analysis and social texture, and guided by the unfolding of events. Readers have also endorsed the book's unique format. *America* is designed to be read and to carry a moderate price. For this reason, we have refused to clutter the text with distracting inserts and expensive color illustrations. In an attempt to help students grasp the major themes and developments in particular periods more easily, we have added a new element to the Fourth Edition. *America* is now divided into seven Parts, each with a brief opening essay that provides an overview of the chapters ahead.

The revisions that set off the Fourth Edition of *America: A Narrative History* highlight frontiers: the experiences of men and women on America's frontiers and the significance of frontiers in shaping the nation's history. Frontiers can be understood in many ways. In announcing that the American frontier had closed in 1893, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner described the frontier as the source of American democratic values and institutions. For Turner the frontier was the place where Americans reinvented themselves, made better lives, tamed the wilderness, and set it on the path to civilized development. The frontier experience forged the distinctive American character and the independence, acquisitiveness, and boldness often attributed to it. Turner's frontier incorporated images already being conjured in American popular culture: savage Indians, virtuous settlers, gritty desperadoes, and gallant mothers and wives.

Turner's "frontier thesis" dominated the teaching of American his-

tory for almost half a century. Yet his uncritical celebration of the dramatic process of westward expansion overlooked many tragedies and failures along the way. It also was highly selective. His cast of characters was made up almost exclusively of white males. He left out many other important actors: Indians, women, Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans, among others.

Despite the flaws in Turner's version of the frontier, the concept itself remains viable. Many historians still find the frontier a useful frame for understanding important aspects of the American experience (not to mention other societies as well). In tracing the significance of the frontier experience in the development of American society and culture, we adopt an expansive definition and an inclusive treatment of its participants.

America has had many frontiers. They were places of fast-paced change. The unsettled conditions in many areas helped alter social relations, including those between women and men. Frontiers also served as crossroads where ethnic and racial groups formed new configurations, often with violent overtones. And the frontier exists in the minds of Americans as a powerful metaphor for change, for the chance to start anew.

There is much that is new in the Fourth Edition of *America*. The frontier theme surfaces in fresh treatments of the Spanish Southwest in the colonial period and the ways Native Americans and Spanish settlers reacted and adapted to each other (Chapters 1 and 4). In Chapter 2 there are new discussions of Indian cultures and societies in the colonial Atlantic region. The French empire in America and its interactions with the Native Americans receive fresh attention in Chapter 4. There are new sections detailing Anglo-Indian relations (Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5), and expanded treatments of the old Southwest (Chapters 14 and 15), the mining frontier (Chapters 16 and 19), the Civil War in the West (Chapter 17), and the development of the West in the late nineteenth century (Chapter 19). This edition of *America* also provides more extensive coverage of the West in the twentieth century, with new discussions of the West during the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, and the particular experiences of Hispanics.

This Fourth Edition, like its predecessor, integrates more social history into the narrative of American experience, detailing the folkways and contributions of those groups often underrepresented in historical treatments—women, blacks, and ethnic Americans. New sections have been added dealing with the Salem witch trials, Andrew Jackson, Clara Barton, Woodrow Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, the D-Day invasion, the social impact of the GI Bill, the “black power” movement, cultural conservatism, and the Clinton administration. This edition also

features new material about religious life in general and revivalism in particular.

In preparing this Fourth Edition of *America* we have benefitted from the insights and suggestions of many people. The following scholars provided close readings of the manuscript at various stages: Holly Mayer (Duquesne University), Jean B. Lee (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Elizabeth Leonard (Colby College), Bruce Field (Northern Illinois University), Virginia DeJohn Anderson (University of Colorado), Fred Anderson (University of Colorado), Charles Eagles (University of Mississippi), and David Parker (Kennebec College). Once again we thank our friends at W. W. Norton, especially Margaret Farley, Kate Brewster, Tim Holahan, and Steve Forman, for their care and attention along the way.

—George B. Tindall

—David E. Shi

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# CONTENTS

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*List of Maps • xiii*

*Preface • xv*

## PART ONE | A NEW WORLD

### 1 | THE COLLISION OF CULTURES 5

PRE-COLUMBIAN INDIAN CIVILIZATIONS 6 • EUROPEAN VISIONS  
OF AMERICA 13 • THE EMERGENCE OF EUROPE 15 • THE  
VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS 18 • THE GREAT BIOLOGICAL  
EXCHANGE 22 • PROFESSIONAL EXPLORERS 25 • THE  
SPANISH EMPIRE 27 • THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION 37  
CHALLENGES TO SPANISH EMPIRE 41 • FURTHER READING 46

### 2 | ENGLAND AND ITS COLONIES 48

THE ENGLISH BACKGROUND 48 • SETTLING THE CHESAPEAKE 53  
SETTLING NEW ENGLAND 65 • INDIANS IN NEW ENGLAND 76  
THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA 81  
SETTLING THE CAROLINAS 83 • SETTLING THE MIDDLE  
COLONIES AND GEORGIA 89 • THRIVING COLONIES 102  
FURTHER READING 103

### 3 | COLONIAL WAYS OF LIFE 106

THE SHAPE OF EARLY AMERICA 106 • SOCIETY AND ECONOMY  
IN THE SOUTHERN COLONIES 117 • SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN  
NEW ENGLAND 131 • SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN THE MIDDLE  
COLONIES 142 • COLONIAL CITIES 147 • THE  
ENLIGHTENMENT 150 • THE GREAT AWAKENING 154  
FURTHER READING 159

### 4 | THE IMPERIAL PERSPECTIVE 163

ENGLISH ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLONIES 163 • THE HABIT  
OF SELF-GOVERNMENT 171 • THE COLONIAL WARS 179  
FURTHER READING 193

### 5 | FROM EMPIRE TO INDEPENDENCE 195

THE HERITAGE OF WAR 195 • BRITISH POLITICS 197  
WESTERN LANDS 198 • GRENVILLE AND THE STAMP ACT 201  
FANNING THE FLAMES 209 • DISCONTENT ON THE FRONTIER 215  
A WORSENING CRISIS 217 • SHIFTING AUTHORITY 225  
INDEPENDENCE 231 • FURTHER READING 234

## PART TWO | BUILDING A NATION

### 6 | THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 240

1776: WASHINGTON'S NARROW ESCAPE 241 • AMERICAN SOCIETY  
AT WAR 244 • 1777: SETBACKS FOR THE BRITISH 248  
1778: BOTH SIDES REGROUP 253 • THE WAR IN THE SOUTH 256  
NEGOTIATIONS 262 • THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION 265  
THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION 269 • EMERGENCE OF AN AMERICAN  
CULTURE 276 • FURTHER READING 280

### 7 | SHAPING A FEDERAL UNION 283

THE CONFEDERATION 283 • ADOPTING THE CONSTITUTION 300  
FURTHER READING 317



8 | THE FEDERALISTS: WASHINGTON AND ADAMS 319

A NEW NATION 319 • HAMILTON'S VISION OF AMERICA 326

THE REPUBLICAN ALTERNATIVE 335 • CRISES

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC 338 • THE ADAMS YEARS 349

FURTHER READING 358

9 | REPUBLICANISM: JEFFERSON AND MADISON 360

A NEW CAPITAL 360 • JEFFERSON IN OFFICE 361

DIVISIONS IN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY 373 • WAR IN EUROPE 376

THE WAR OF 1812 380 • FURTHER READING 393

10 | NATIONALISM AND SECTIONALISM 396

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM 396 • "GOOD FEELINGS" 401

SPECULATION AND SLAVERY 407 • JUDICIAL NATIONALISM 411

NATIONALIST DIPLOMACY 415 • ONE-PARTY POLITICS 417

FURTHER READING 426

### PART THREE | AN EXPANSIVE NATION

11   THE JACKSONIAN IMPULSE	432	
SETTING THE STAGE	432 • NULLIFICATION	438
JACKSON'S INDIAN POLICY	445 • THE BANK CONTROVERSY	449
VAN BUREN AND THE NEW PARTY SYSTEM	457	
ASSESSING THE JACKSON YEARS	464	
FURTHER READING	466	
12   THE DYNAMICS OF GROWTH	469	
AGRICULTURE AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMY	469	
TRANSPORTATION AND THE NATIONAL ECONOMY	475 • THE	
GROWTH OF INDUSTRY	485 • IMMIGRATION	496
ORGANIZED LABOR	506 • JACKSONIAN INEQUALITY	509
FURTHER READING	510	

13 | AN AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: ROMANTICISM AND REFORM  
512

RATIONAL RELIGION 512 • THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING 514  
ROMANTICISM IN AMERICA 523 • THE FLOWERING OF  
AMERICAN LITERATURE 528 • EDUCATION 538  
SOME MOVEMENTS FOR REFORM 544  
FURTHER READING 557

14 | MANIFEST DESTINY 560

THE TYLER YEARS 560 • MOVING WEST 563 • THE INDIAN  
AND SPANISH FRONTIER 564 • ANNEXING TEXAS 578  
POLK'S PRESIDENCY 582 • THE MEXICAN WAR 587  
FURTHER READING 596

PART FOUR | A HOUSE DIVIDED AND REBUILT

---

15 | THE OLD SOUTH: AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY 602

MYTH, REALITY, AND THE OLD SOUTH 602 • WHITE SOCIETY IN  
THE SOUTH 610 • BLACK SOCIETY IN THE SOUTH 616  
THE CULTURE OF THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER 627  
ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENTS 631 • FURTHER READING 640

16 | THE CRISIS OF UNION 644

SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES 644 • THE COMPROMISE OF 1850  
652 • FOREIGN ADVENTURES 659 • THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA  
CRISIS 662 • THE DEEPENING SECTIONAL CRISIS 672 • THE  
CENTER COMES APART 681 • FURTHER READING 688

17 | THE WAR OF THE UNION 690

END OF THE WAITING GAME 690 • THE BALANCE OF FORCE 696  
A MODERN WAR 701 • MILITARY DEADLOCK 702  
THE WAR'S EARLY COURSE 705 • EMANCIPATION 718  
WOMEN AND THE WAR 725 • GOVERNMENT DURING THE WAR 728  
THE FALTERING CONFEDERACY 735  
THE CONFEDERACY'S DEFEAT 741 • FURTHER READING 748

---

18 | RECONSTRUCTION: NORTH AND SOUTH 751

THE WAR'S AFTERMATH 751 • THE BATTLE OVER  
RECONSTRUCTION 757 • RECONSTRUCTING THE SOUTH 768  
BLACKS IN THE RECONSTRUCTED SOUTH 773  
THE GRANT YEARS 784 • FURTHER READING 794

APPENDIX A1

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE A1 • ARTICLES OF  
CONFEDERATION A5 • THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED  
STATES A12 • PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS A30  
ADMISSION OF STATES A34 • POPULATION OF THE UNITED  
STATES A35 • IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES, FISCAL  
YEARS 1820–1990 A36 • IMMIGRATION BY REGION AND  
SELECTED COUNTRY OF LAST RESIDENCE, FISCAL YEARS  
1820–1989 A38 • PRESIDENTS, VICE-PRESIDENTS, AND  
SECRETARIES OF STATE A45  
CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS A47

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS A53

INDEX A57

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## MAPS

---

- The First Migration 7
- Pre-Columbian Indian Civilizations in  
Middle and South America 9
- Pre-Columbian Indian Civilizations in  
North America 11
- Norse Discoveries 14
- Columbus's Voyages 21
- Spanish and Portuguese Explorations  
26
- Spanish Explorations of the Mainland  
33
- English, French, and Dutch  
Explorations 42
- Land Grants to the Virginia Company  
54
- Early Virginia and Maryland 60
- Early New England Settlements 65
- The West Indies, 1600–1800 71
- Early Settlements in the South 84
- The Middle Colonies 96
- European Settlements and Indian  
Tribes in Early America 100–1
- The African Slave Trade, 1500–1800  
122
- Atlantic Trade Routes 133
- Major Immigrant Groups in Colonial  
America 144
- The French in North America 180
- The Seven Years' War: Major  
Campaigns, 1754–1760 187
- North America, 1713 192
- North America, 1763 193
- The Frontier in the 1760s 199
- Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775  
227
- Major Campaigns in New York and  
New Jersey, 1776–1777 242
- Major Campaigns of 1777: Saratoga and  
Philadelphia 249
- Western Campaigns, 1776–1779 255
- Major Campaigns in the South,  
1778–1781 257
- North America, 1783 264
- Western Land Cessions, 1781–1802  
287
- The Old Northwest, 1785 289
- The Vote on the Constitution 311
- The Treaty of Greenville, 1795 343
- Pinckney's Treaty, 1795 345
- Election of 1800 357
- Explorations of the Louisiana Purchase  
369
- The War of 1812: Major Northern  
Campaigns 385
- The War of 1812: Major Southern  
Campaigns 389
- The National Road, 1811–1838 400
- Boundary Treaties, 1818–1819 407
- The Missouri Compromise (1820) 410
- Election of 1828 426
- Indian Removal, 1820–1840 448
- Election of 1840 464
- Population Density, 1820 472
- Population Density, 1860 473

- Transportation West, about 1840  
476-77
- The Growth of Railroads, 1850 482
- The Growth of Railroads, 1860 483
- The Growth of Industry, 1840s 493
- The Growth of Cities, 1820 495
- The Growth of Cities, 1860 495
- The Mormon Trek, 1830-1851 521
- The Webster-Ashburton Treaty, 1842  
563
- Wagon Trails West 570
- Election of 1844 583
- The Oregon Dispute, 1818-1846 586
- The Mexican War: Major Campaigns  
592
- Cotton Production, 1821 606
- Population Growth and Cotton  
Production, 1821-1859 606
- Slave Population, 1820 619
- Slave Population, 1860 619
- Compromise of 1850 656
- The Gadsden Purchase, 1853 663
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854 667
- Election of 1856 671
- Election of 1860 685
- Secession, 1860-1861 693
- First Bull Run, July 21, 1861 700
- Campaigns in the West, February-April  
1862 709
- Campaigns in the West,  
August-October 1862 711
- The Peninsular Campaign, 1862 712
- Campaigns in Virginia and Maryland,  
1862 717
- Vicksburg, 1863 737
- Campaigns in the East, 1863 738
- Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863 738
- Battles near Chattanooga, 1863 740
- Grant in Virginia, 1864-1865 743
- Sherman's Campaigns, 1864-1865  
745
- Reconstruction, 1865-1877 783
- Election of 1876 792

P A R T   O N E

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# A NEW WORLD



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Long before Christopher Columbus accidentally discovered the New World in his effort to find a passage to Asia, the tribal peoples he mislabeled "Indians" had occupied and shaped the lands of the Western Hemisphere. The first people to settle the New World were nomadic hunters and gatherers who migrated from northeastern Asia during the last glacial advance of the ice age, nearly twenty thousand years ago. By the end of the fifteenth century, when Columbus began his voyage west, there were millions of Native Americans living in the Western Hemisphere. Over the centuries, they had developed stable, diverse, and often highly sophisticated societies, some rooted in agriculture, others in trade or imperial conquest.

The native American cultures were, of course, profoundly affected by the arrival of peoples from Europe and Africa. They were exploited, enslaved, displaced, and exterminated. Yet this conventional tale of conquest oversimplifies the complex process by which Indians, Europeans, and Africans interacted. The Indians were more than passive victims; they were also trading partners and rivals of the transatlantic newcomers. They became enemies and allies, neighbors and advisors, converts and spouses. As such they fully participated in the creation of the new society known as America.

The Europeans who risked their lives to settle in the New World were themselves quite diverse. Young and old, men and women, they came from Spain, Portugal, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, and the various German states. A variety of motives inspired them to undertake the transatlantic voyage. Some were adventurers and fortune seekers, eager to find gold and spices. Others were fervent Christians determined to create kingdoms of God in the New World. Still others were convicts, debtors, indentured servants, or political or religious exiles. Many were simply seeking higher wages and greater economic opportunity. A settler in Pennsylvania noted that "poor people (both men and women) of all kinds, can here get three times the wages for their labour than they can in England or Wales."

Yet such enticements were not sufficient to attract enough workers to keep up with the rapidly expanding colonial economies. So the Europeans began to force Indians to work for them. But there were never enough of them to meet the unceasing demand. Moreover, they often escaped or were so obstreperous that several colonies banned

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*their use. The Massachusetts legislature did so because Indians were of such "a malicious, surly and revengeful spirit; rude and insolent in their behavior, and very ungovernable."*

*Beginning early in the seventeenth century, more and more colonists turned to the African slave trade for their labor needs. In 1619 white traders began transporting captured Africans to the English colonies. This development would transform American society in ways that no one at the time envisioned. Few Europeans during the colonial era saw the contradiction between the New World's promise of individual freedom and the expanding institution of race slavery. Nor did they reckon with the problems associated with introducing into the new society peoples they considered alien and unassimilable.*

*The intermingling of peoples, cultures, and ecosystems from the three continents of Africa, Europe, and North America gave colonial American society its distinctive vitality and variety. In turn, the diversity of the environment and climate led to the creation of quite different economies and patterns of living in the various regions of North America. As the original settlements grew into prosperous and populous colonies, the transplanted Europeans had to fashion social institutions and political systems to manage growth and control tensions.*

*At the same time, imperial rivalries among the Spanish, French, English, and Dutch produced numerous intrigues and costly wars. The monarchs of Europe had a difficult time trying to manage and exploit this fluid and often volatile colonial society. Many of the colonists, they discovered, brought with them to the New World a feisty independence that led them to resent government interference in their affairs. A British official in North Carolina reported that the residents of the Piedmont region were "without any Law or Order. Impudence is so very high [among them], as to be past bearing." As long as the reins of imperial control were loosely applied, the two parties maintained an uneasy partnership. But as the British authorities tightened their control during the mid-eighteenth century, they met resistance, which became revolt, and culminated in revolution.*



