

VOLUME I: TO 1877

---

# NATION OF NATIONS

---

A NARRATIVE  
HISTORY  
OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC



DAVIDSON  
GIENAPP  
HEYRMAN  
LYTLE  
STOFF



---

# NATION OF NATIONS

---

A NARRATIVE  
HISTORY  
OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

VOLUME I: TO 1877

JAMES WEST DAVIDSON

WILLIAM E. GIENAPP

The University of Wyoming

CHRISTINE LEIGH HEYRMAN

Brandeis University

MARK H. LYTLE

Bard College

MICHAEL B. STOFF

The University of Texas, Austin

McGRAW-HILL PUBLISHING COMPANY

New York St. Louis San Francisco Auckland Bogotá Caracas Hamburg Lisbon  
London Madrid Mexico Milan Montreal New Delhi Oklahoma City Paris  
San Juan São Paulo Singapore Sydney Tokyo Toronto

NATION OF NATIONS: A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC  
Volume I: To 1877

Copyright © 1990 by McGraw-Hill, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 VNH VNH 8 9 4 3 2 1 0 9

ISBN 0-07-557198-6

This book was set in Caledonia by York Graphic Services Inc.  
The editors were Christopher J. Rogers and Judith Kromm;  
the designer was John Lennard;  
the production supervisor was Laura Lamorte.  
Von Hoffmann Press, Inc., was printer and binder.

Cover Credit

John Lewis Krimmel, "Fourth of July Celebration in Center Square, Philadelphia, 1819"  
Courtesy, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Nation of nations: a narrative history of the American republic /  
James West Davidson . . . [et al.].

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

Contents: v. 1. To 1877.

ISBN 0-07-557198-6 (v. 1)

1. United States—History. I. Davidson, James West.

E178.1.N346 1990

973—dc20

89-14592

~~U\$25.45E1~~

NATION  
OF NATIONS  
Volume I: To 1877

Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations.

—WALT WHITMAN

81  
/





---

# PREFACE

History is both a discipline of rigor, bound by rules and scholarly methods, and something more: the unique, compelling, even strange way in which we humans define ourselves. We are all the sum of the tales of thousands of people, great and small, whose actions have etched their lines upon us. History supplies our very identity—a sense of the social groups to which we belong, whether family, ethnic group, race, class, or gender. It reveals to us the foundations of our deepest religious beliefs and traces the roots of our economic and political systems. It explores how we celebrate and grieve, sing the songs we sing, weather the illnesses to which time and chance subject us. It commands our attention for all these good reasons and for no good reason at all, other than a fascination with the way the myriad tales play out. Strange that we should come to care about a host of men and women so many centuries gone, some with names eminent and familiar, others unknown but for a chance scrap of information left behind in an obscure letter.

Yet we do care. We care about Sir Humphrey Gilbert, “devoured and swallowed up of the Sea” one black Atlantic night in 1583, about George Washington at Kips Bay, red with fury as he takes a riding crop to his retreating soldiers. We care about Octave Johnson, a slave fleeing through Louisiana swamps trying to decide whether to stand and fight the approaching hounds or take his chances with the bayou alligators, about Clara Barton, her nurse’s skirts so heavy with blood from the wounded, she must wring them out before tending to the next soldier. We are drawn to the fate of Chinese laborers, chipping away at the Sierras’ looming granite; a Georgian named Tom Watson seeking to forge a colorblind political alliance; and desperate immigrant mothers, kerosene in hand, storming Brooklyn butcher shops that had again raised prices. We follow, with a mix of awe and amusement, the fortunes of the quirky Henry Ford (“Everybody wants to be somewhere he ain’t”), turning out identical automobiles, insisting his factory workers wear identical expressions (“Fordization of the Face”). We trace the career of young Thurgood Marshall, crisscrossing the South in his own “little old beat-up ’29 Ford,” typing legal briefs in the back seat, trying to get black teachers to sue for equal pay, hoping to get his people somewhere they weren’t. The list could go on and on, spilling out as it did in Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*: “A southerner soon as a northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable, / A Yankee bound my own way. . . . a Hoosier, a Badger, a Buckeye, a Louisianian or Georgian. . . .” Whit-

man embraced and celebrated them all, inseparable strands of what made him an American and what made him human:

In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less,  
And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.

To encompass so expansive an America Whitman turned to poetry; historians have traditionally chosen *narrative* as their means of giving life to the past. That mode of explanation permits them to interweave the strands of economic, political, and social history in a coherent chronological framework. By choosing narrative, they affirm the multicausal nature of historical explanation—the insistence that events be portrayed in context. By choosing narrative, they are also acknowledging that, while long-term economic and social trends shape societies in deep and significant ways, events often take on a logic (or illogic) of their own, jostling one another, being deflected and redirected by unpredictable successions of personal decisions, sudden deaths, natural catastrophes, and chance. There are literary reasons, too, for preferring a narrative approach, since it supplies a dramatic force usually missing from more structural analyses of the past.

In some ways, surveys like this one are the natural antithesis of narrative history. They strive, by definition, to be comprehensive: to furnish a broad, orderly exposition of their chosen field. Yet to cover so much ground in so limited a space necessarily deprives readers of the pacing and context of more detailed accounts. Then, too, the resurgence of social history—with its concern for class and race, patterns of rural and urban life, the spread of market and industrial economies—lends itself to more analytic, less chronological treatments. The challenge facing historians is to incorporate these areas of research without losing the narrative drive that propels the story or sacrificing the chronological flow that orients readers to the more familiar events of our past.

Lately there has been increased attention to the worldwide breakdown of so many nonmarket economies, and by inference, to the greater success of the market societies of the United States and other capitalist nations. As our own narrative makes clear, American society and politics have indeed come together centrally in the marketplace. What Americans produce, how and where they produce it, and the desire to buy cheap and sell dear have been defining elements in every era. That market orientation has created unparalleled abundance and reinforced striking inequalities, not the least a society in which, for two centuries, human beings themselves were bought and sold. It has made Americans powerfully provincial in protecting local interests and internationally adventurous in seeking to expand wealth and opportunity.

It goes without saying that Americans have not always produced wisely or well. The insistent drive toward material plenty has levied a heavy tax on the global environment. Too often quantity has substituted for quality, whether we talk of cars, education, or culture. When markets flourish, the nation abounds with confidence that any problem, no matter how intractable, can be solved. When markets fail, however, the fault lines of our political and social systems become all too evident.

In the end, then, it is impossible to separate the marketplace of boom and bust and the world of ordinary Americans from the corridors of political maneuvering or the ceremonial pomp of an inauguration. To treat political and social history



as distinct spheres or hostile camps is counterproductive. The primary question of this narrative—how the fledgling, often tumultuous confederation of “these United States” managed to transform itself into an enduring republic—is not only political, but necessarily social. In order to survive, a republic must resolve conflicts between citizens of different geographic regions and economic classes, of diverse racial and ethnic origins, of competing religions and ideologies. The resolution of these conflicts has produced tragic consequences, perhaps, as often as noble ones. But tragic or noble, the destiny of these states cannot be understood without comprehending the social dimension of the story.

A word about organization and strategies. The narrative is divided into six parts, each beginning with a brief essay setting American events of the period in a global context. We believe it important to make clear that the United States did not develop in a geographic or cultural vacuum and that the broad forces shaping it also influenced other nations. Thus we compare the extraordinary demographic growth of colonial America with the worldwide eighteenth-century rise in population; the effects of democratic and industrial revolutions here with those abroad; the massive voluntary migrations of the nineteenth century to many parts of the globe. We examine the rise of industrial societies of the twentieth century and the environmental constraints to growth as we approach the twenty-first. Each essay ends with a time line comparing political and social events in the United States with developments elsewhere.

Throughout the book we have sought to sustain a narrative approach, starting with introductory episodes for each chapter. Complementing the narrative for each chapter is a two-page essay, “Daily Lives,” focusing on one of five topics that give insight into the lives of ordinary Americans: clothing and fashion; time and travel; food, drink, and drugs; political culture; public and private spaces. These topics recur regularly throughout the book, providing additional thematic continuity. Each chapter concludes with a summary of significant events; full and up-to-date bibliographies can be found at the back of the book.

For each of the book’s six parts, we have included an essay, “Generations of the Republic,” which takes one generation of Americans and charts its progress from birth, childhood, and adolescence through courtship, marriage, adulthood, and old age. In moving from the first Anglo-Americans (Part 1) to the baby-boomers born in the 1940s and 50s (Part 6), we have sought to integrate recent research on family structure and demographics with a sense of how national events affected the lives of ordinary citizens. In effect, we are applying a narrative approach to illuminating the intersection of biography and history.

Any account of a republic with a global reach must be geographically grounded. We have taken particular care in developing the maps for this book, working closely with the cartographers to create geographically detailed yet clear renderings. Full captions are provided whenever necessary; a number of maps are unique to this book, while many others include unusual information. In addition, six geographic essays explore such topics as the commercial and subsistence regions of the young republic, the economics of cotton in the post-Civil War South, and the geographic aspects of the war in Vietnam.

In addition to characterizing the American experience through a complement of paintings, photographs and drawings, we have tried to convey a sense of change over time by incorporating into the book’s design contemporary printers’ orna-



ments. The initial blocks opening each chapter have been taken from type specimen books of different eras; similarly, the decorative drawings have come from contemporary engravings.

Many people proved indispensable to the completion of this effort. In the editorial department, first at Alfred A. Knopf and then McGraw-Hill, Edna Shalev and Niels Aaboe somehow managed to keep control of the project's many facets, as did Project Manager Judith Kromm, Production Manager Laura Lamorte, and Photo Manager Safra Nimrod during production. John Lennard took our often inchoate suggestions of how this book might look and transformed them into a clean, elegant design. We are grateful, as well, to a host of readers whose comments and suggestions helped improve an earlier draft of this manuscript. They include Carol Berkin, Baruch College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York; Roger W. Biles, Oklahoma State University; Carol Brown, Houston Community College; Victor Chen, Chabot College; Mario S. DePillis, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Lynn Dumenil, Claremont McKenna College; Robert Elam, Modesto Junior College; Robert G. Fricke, West Valley College; James L. Gormly, Washington and Jefferson College; Peter Iverson, Arizona State University; George Juergens, Indiana University; Mark H. Leff, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; John McCardell, Middlebury College; Gerald W. McFarland, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Dennis C. Rousey, Arkansas State University; James C. Schneider, University of Texas, San Antonio; Lewright B. Sikes, Middle Tennessee State University; Gregory Holmes Singleton, Northeastern Illinois University; David Sloan, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Donna J. Spindel, Marshall University; Thomas E. Terrill, University of South Carolina; Stephen G. Weisner, Springfield Technical Community College; Frank J. Wetta, Galveston College; and William Bruce Wheeler, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In addition, many friends and colleagues contributed their advice and constructive criticism in ways both small and large. These included Michael Bellesiles, Lawrence A. Cardoso, Dinah Chenven, James E. Crisp, R. David Edmunds, Drew McCoy, James McPherson, Stephen E. Maizlish, Harold Silesky, David J. Weber, and Virginia Joyner.

For a book to be successful, of course, the dialogue between readers and authors should continue. We welcome comments, criticisms, or suggestions, any of which will reach us addressed care of McGraw-Hill, College Department (History), 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020.

The division of labor for this book was determined by our respective fields of scholarship: Christine Heyrman, the colonial era, in which Europeans, Africans, and Indians participated in the making of both a new America and a new republic; William Gienapp, the ninety years in which the young nation first flourished, then foundered on the issues of section and slavery; Michael Stoff, the post-Civil War era, in which industrialization and urbanization brought the nation more centrally into an international system constantly disrupted by depression and war; and Mark Lytle, the modern era, in which Americans finally faced the reality that even the boldest dreams of national greatness are bounded by the finite nature of power and resources both natural and human. Finally, because the need to specialize inevitably imposes limits on any project as broad as this one, our fifth author, James Davidson, served as a general editor and writer, with the intent of fitting individual parts to the whole, as well as providing a measure of continuity, style, and overarching purpose. In producing this collaborative effort, all of us have shared the conviction that the best history speaks to a larger audience.

We began the writing of this book as friends; what is perhaps more unusual, given the strains of such undertakings, is that over the years our friendship deepened. The responsibility for such a happy outcome no doubt rests squarely on the shoulders of our editor, Christopher Rogers. He conceived the project, brought the authors together, consistently pushed us to make this the best book it could be, and marshalled the unstinting support of our publisher for its completion and production. Authors could ask for no more from an editor.

JAMES WEST DAVIDSON  
WILLIAM E. GIENAPP  
CHRISTINE LEIGH HEYRMAN  
MARK H. LYTTLE  
MICHAEL B. STOFF

---

# CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS AND CHARTS xvii

PREFACE xix

---

## **PART 1**

### **THE CREATION OF A NEW AMERICA 2**

#### **CHAPTER 1 Old World, New Worlds 8**

##### **The Meeting of Europe and America 11**

The Portuguese Wave 14

The Spanish and Columbus 16

##### **Early North American Cultures 17**

The First Inhabitants 17

Societies of Increasing Complexity 18

##### **The European Background of American Colonization 21**

Life and Death in Early Modern Europe 21

The Conditions of Colonization 23

##### **Spain's Empire in the New World 25**

Spanish Conquest 25

Spanish Colonization 27

##### **The Prelude to England's American Colonization 29**

Backdrop to the Reformation 30

The Teaching of Martin Luther 31

The Contribution of John Calvin 32

The English Reformation 33

The English Colonization of Ireland 34

##### **England's Entry into the New World 35**

The Failures of Frobisher and Gilbert 36

Raleigh's Roanoke Venture 38

DAILY LIVES: "Barbaric" Dress—Indian and European 40

#### **CHAPTER 2 The First Century of Settlement in the Colonial South 44**

##### **English Society Takes Shape on the Chesapeake 47**

The Virginia Company 48

Reform and a Boom in Tobacco	49
Settling Down on the Chesapeake	52
The Founding of Maryland and the Renewal of Indian Wars	54
Changes in English Policy in the Chesapeake	55
<b>Chesapeake Society in Crisis</b>	<b>56</b>
The Conditions of Unrest	56
Bacon's Rebellion and Coode's Rebellion	57
From Servitude to Slavery	59
The Chesapeake Gentry	62
<b>From the Caribbean to the Carolinas</b>	<b>65</b>
Paradise Lost Beyond the Line	65
The Founding of the Carolinas	67
Early Instability	70
White, Red, and Black: The Search for Order	72
The Founding of Georgia	74
<b>The Spanish Borderlands</b>	<b>76</b>
DAILY LIVES: A Taste for Sugar	68

### **CHAPTER 3 The First Century of Settlement in the Colonial North 80**

<b>The Founding of New England</b>	<b>83</b>
The Puritan Movement	84
The Pilgrim Settlement at Plymouth Colony	85
The Puritan Settlement in Massachusetts Bay	87
<b>New England Communities</b>	<b>89</b>
New England Families	89
Local Life in Early New England	92
Deviance and Dissent	94
Heresy	96
Goodwives	98
White and Indians in Early New England	99
<b>The Middle Colonies</b>	<b>100</b>
The Founding of New Netherlands	101
English Rule in New York	102
The League of the Iroquois	103
The Founding of New Jersey	105
Quaker Odysseys	105
<b>Adjustment to Empire</b>	<b>108</b>
The Dominion of New England	109
The Aftershocks of a Glorious Revolution	110
Leisler's Rebellion	111
Royal Authority in America in 1700	112
DAILY LIVES: The Rituals of Mourning	90



**CHAPTER 4   The Mosaic of Eighteenth-Century America   118****Forces of Division   121**

- Immigration and Natural Increase   121
- Older Rural Communities   123
- The Settlement of the Backcountry   126
- Social Conflict on the Frontier   129
- Boundary Disputes and Tenant Wars   130
- Eighteenth-Century Seaports   131
- Social Conflict in Seaports   135

**Slave Societies in the Eighteenth-Century South   136**

- The Slave Family and Community   137
- Slave Resistance in the Eighteenth Century   138

**Enlightenment and Awakening in America   140**

- The Enlightenment in America   140
- The First Great Awakening   141
- The Aftermath of the Great Awakening   143

**The Anglo-American Worlds of the Eighteenth Century   144**

- Urban Life in England and America   145
- Economic Development and Inequality   145
- Politics in England and America   148
- The English Opposition and American Political Thought   149
- The Imperial System Before 1760   151

**Toward the Seven Years' War   153**

DAILY LIVES: Transatlantic Trials   124

---

**PART 2****THE CREATION OF A NEW REPUBLIC   156****CHAPTER 5   Toward the War for American Independence   160****The Seven Years' War   162**

- The Years of Defeat   162
- The Years of Victory   163
- Postwar Expectations   167

**The Imperial Crisis   168**

- New Troubles on the Frontier   169
- George Grenville's New Measures   169
- The Beginning of American Resistance   172
- The Townshend Acts   178
- Resistance Revived   181
- The Empire Strikes Back   182
- Toward the Revolution   184
- The First Continental Congress   185
- The Last Days of the British Empire in America   187
- The Fighting Begins   189
- Common Sense*   190

DAILY LIVES: The Rituals of Revolutionary Protest   176

<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	<b>The American People and the American Revolution</b>	<b>192</b>
	<b>The Decision for Independence</b>	<b>194</b>
	The Second Continental Congress	195
	American Loyalists	197
	<b>The Fighting in the North</b>	<b>202</b>
	The Two Armies at Bay	202
	Laying Strategies	204
	The Campaigns in New York and New Jersey	205
	Capturing Philadelphia	206
	Disaster at Saratoga	208
	<b>The Turning Point</b>	<b>209</b>
	An Alliance Formed	209
	Winding Down the War in the North	211
	The Home Front in the North	214
	<b>The Struggle in the South</b>	<b>215</b>
	The Siege of Charleston	215
	The Partisan Struggle in the South	216
	Greene Takes Command	218
	African-Americans in the Age of Revolution	220
	<b>The World Turned Upside Down</b>	<b>222</b>
	DAILY LIVES: Radical Chic and the Revolutionary Generation	198
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	<b>Crisis and Constitution</b>	<b>226</b>
	<b>Republican Experiments</b>	<b>229</b>
	The State Constitutions	229
	From Congress to Confederation	231
	<b>The Temptations of Peace</b>	<b>232</b>
	The Temptations of the West	233
	Slavery and Sectionalism	239
	Wartime Economic Disruption	241
	<b>Republican Society</b>	<b>243</b>
	The New Men of the Revolution	243
	Urban Artisans	246
	The New Women of the Revolution	246
	The Attack on Aristocracy	248
	<b>From Confederation to Constitution</b>	<b>250</b>
	The Jay–Gardoqui Treaty	250
	Shays’ Rebellion	251
	The Framing of the Federal Constitution	252
	Ratification	255
	DAILY LIVES: The Spirits of Independence	244
<hr/>		
	Generations of the Republic: The First African-Americans (1740–1800)	258
<hr/>		
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	<b>The Republic Launched</b>	<b>262</b>
	<b>1789: A Social Portrait</b>	<b>264</b>

The Subsistence Economy of Crèvecoeur's America	265
The Commercial Economy of Franklin's America	269
The Constitution and Commerce	271

#### **The New Government 272**

Washington's Character	272
Organizing the Government	273
The Bill of Rights	274
Hamilton's Financial Program	275
Opposition to Hamilton's Program	276
The Specter of Aristocracy	279

#### **Expansion and Turmoil in the West 279**

The Resistance of the Miamis	280
The Whiskey Rebellion	280
Pinckney's Treaty	282

#### **The Emergence of Political Parties 282**

The French Revolution	283
Washington's Neutral Course	284
The Federalists and Republicans Organize	285
The 1796 Election	287
Federalist and Republican Ideologies	288

#### **The Presidency of John Adams 289**

The Quasi-War with France	290
Suppression at Home	290
The Election of 1800	292
Political Violence in the Early Republic	292

DAILY LIVES: The Rise of "Vile Electioneering"	294
--	-----

### **CHAPTER 9 The Jeffersonian Republic 298**

#### **Jefferson in Power 300**

The New Capital City	301
Jefferson's Character	302
Jefferson's Political Philosophy	302
Republican Principles	304
Jefferson's Economic Policies	304
John Marshall and Judicial Review	305
The Jeffersonian Attack on the Judiciary	307

#### **Jefferson and Western Expansion 307**

The Louisiana Purchase	308
Lewis and Clark	309

#### **Whites and Indians on the Frontier 311**

The Course of White Penetration	311
The Second Great Awakening	312
Black Hoof and the Choice of Assimilation	316
The Prophet, Tecumseh, and the Pan-Indian Movement	318

#### **The Second War for American Independence 320**

Neutral Rights	321
The Embargo	322
Madison and the Young Republicans	323

The Decision for War	324
National Unpreparedness	325
“A Chance Such as Never Will Occur Again”	327
The British Invasion	327
The Hartford Convention	329

### **America Turns Inward 329**

Monroe’s Presidency	330
The Monroe Doctrine	330
The End of an Era	332

DAILY LIVES: The Frontier Camp Meeting	314
--	-----

## **PART 3**

# **THE REPUBLIC TRANSFORMED AND TESTED 334**

## **CHAPTER 10 The Opening of America 338**

### **The Market Revolution 340**

The New Nationalism	341
The Cotton Trade	342
The Transportation Revolution	342
The Canal Age	343
Steamboats	344
Railroads	346
Agriculture in the Market Economy	347
John Marshall and the Promotion of Enterprise	350
General Incorporation Laws	351

### **A Restless Temper 352**

Population Growth	353
The Federal Land Rush	354
Geographic Mobility	356
Urbanization	356

### **The Rise of Factories 357**

Technological Advances	358
Textile Factories	359
Industrial Work	362
The Shoe Industry	362
The Labor Movement	363

### **Social Structures of the Market Society 364**

The Distribution of Wealth	365
Social Mobility	366
Materialism	366
The Redefinition of Time	367
The Market at Work: Three Examples	367

### **Prosperity and Anxiety 369**

The Panic of 1819	370
The Missouri Crisis	371

DAILY LIVES: Floating Palaces of the West	348
---	-----



**CHAPTER 11 The Rise of Democracy 374****Equality and Opportunity 377**

The Tension between Equality and Opportunity 378

**The New Political Culture of Democracy 379**

The Election of 1824 380

Anti-Masonry and the Defense of Equality 380

Social Sources of the New Politics 382

The Acceptance of Parties 383

The Politics of the Common Man 384

**Jackson's Rise to Power 385**

John Quincy Adams' Presidency 385

President of the People 386

The Political Agenda in the Market Economy 387

**Democracy and Race 388**

Accommodate or Resist? 388

Trail of Tears 390

Free Blacks in the North 392

The African-American Community 394

The Minstrel Show 395

**The Nullification Crisis 396**

The Growing Crisis in South Carolina 396

Calhoun's Theory of Nullification 397

The Nullifiers Nullified 398

**The Bank War 399**

The National Bank and the Panic of 1819 399

Biddle's Bank 400

The Clash between Jackson and Biddle 401

The Bank Destroyed 402

Jackson's Impact on the Presidency 402

**Van Buren and Depression 403**

"Van Ruin's" Depression 403

The Whigs' Triumph 405

**The Jacksonian Party System 408**

Democrats, Whigs, and the Market 408

The Social Bases of the Two Parties 410

The Triumph of the Market 410

DAILY LIVES: The Log Cabin Campaign 406

**CHAPTER 12 The Quest for Perfection 412****Revivalism and the Social Order 415**

Finney's New Measures 416

The Philosophy of the New Revivals 416

Religion and the Market Economy 417

The Significance of the Second Great Awakening 418