

JOHN A. GARRATTY



SHORT HISTORY OF  
THE AMERICAN NATION

SEVENTH EDITION

# **A Short History of the American Nation**

*Seventh Edition*

**John A. Garraty**

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Columbia University, Emeritus



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# **A Short History of the American Nation**

This is the seventh edition of *A Short History of the American Nation*, the sixth time I have revised it, and the process remains for me both challenging and endlessly fascinating. Historians try to explain what happened in the past and of course “what happened” does not change. But what is important to point out about the past is that it changes constantly as more information about past events comes to light and as current events raise new questions about the events and people of earlier times. Year by year hundreds of new books and articles are published about various aspects of American history; when those dealing with any particular subject have been digested and synthesized and combined with already existing knowledge, a new, “up-to-date” description of that topic results. This process keeps authors like me who write American history textbooks very busy.

## Goals of This Revision

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The work of revising a survey of all American history takes many forms. First there are the small alterations involved in incorporating new details and examples, and in clarifying obscurities that have previously escaped notice. Then there is the matter of bringing the narrative as close to the present as possible, something that is relatively easy to do, but difficult to do well. Nearly always revision also involves changes in emphasis—some subjects need to be condensed or eliminated; others require more space either because more has been discovered about them or because recent developments make them seem more significant. Finally, and most important, are the larger changes made necessary because historians, responding to contemporary interests, to noteworthy work being done by colleagues and other specialists, and to the questions and interests of their students, have produced persuasive new interpretations and even opened up entirely new subjects. Dealing with this work, in turn, re-

quires more of the simpler kinds of revisions just mentioned.

This revision of *A Short History of the American Nation* contains many examples of all these types of change.

## Organizational Changes

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To improve the flow of topics and to readjust the amount of space devoted to various periods of American history, I have reorganized and condensed Chapters 7 through 10. Chapters 7 and 8, covering the political history of the Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams administrations, have been tightened and combined, and a new section on the meaning of sectionalism added. The material in Chapter 11 of the sixth edition dealing with immigration and the lives of working people has been added to the chapter “Toward a National Economy,” now Chapter 8.

## New Coverage and Features

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At many key points, especially when dealing with the colonial period and the American Revolution, more attention has been devoted to the impact of Spain and of Hispanic culture on American development. Chapter 1 contains a new section, “Spain’s American Empire,” and there are expanded discussions of Spain’s role in the Revolution and on Spanish activities along the southern and western frontier of the United States in the 1780s and 1790s. Coverage of Indian-European interactions in the 16th and 17th centuries has also been revised.

As in every new edition of *A Short History of the American Nation*, I have paid a good deal of attention also to the “Supplementary Readings” at the end of each chapter. I have eliminated many older titles that, although valuable, are out of print, and I have substituted more recent and in



most instances equally worthwhile volumes that are readily available, often in paperback.

## Approach

In making all these changes and others less important, I have not, I trust, altered my basic approach to American history, which is to deal with the subject in narrative fashion and to use the political history of the nation as the frame or skeleton on which social, economic, and cultural developments depend. The American nation (the United States) is, after all, a political institution.

The people of the United States, in their infinite variety, also remain central to my account. The theory that a few great individuals, cut from larger cloth than the general run of human beings, have shaped the course of past events oversimplifies history. But the past becomes more comprehensible when attention is paid to how the major figures on the historical stage have reacted to events and to one another. Since generalizations require concrete illustration if they are to be grasped fully, readers will find many anecdotes and quotations on the following pages, along with the facts and dates and statistics every good history must contain. This illustrative material is interesting, and most of it is entertaining, but I believe it is instructive as well.

I also believe that one need not be an uncritical admirer of the American nation and its people to recognize that the history of the United States deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Individually and as a society, we have rarely lived up perfectly to the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, but recent events in Eastern Europe demonstrate how cherished these "American" values are by people who have been deprived of them. American values are not well served by patriotic hoopla or by slighting or excusing dark and discreditable aspects of the American past. The English radical Oliver Cromwell is said to have told an artist who was painting his picture to portray him "warts and all." Cromwell wanted to be remembered as he was, confident that, on balance, history would judge him fairly. This is another principle on which *A Short History of the American Nation* continues to be based.

## Supplements

### For Instructors

***Instructor's Resource Manual.*** Written by Michael Mayer of the University of Montana, this volume has been designed to aid both the novice and experienced instructor in teaching American history. Each chapter includes a concise chapter overview, a list of points for student mastery, lecture supplements, and questions for class discussion. A special feature of each chapter is a set of documents with accompanying questions for student analysis.

***Longman Comprehensive American History Transparency Set.*** This vast collection of American history map transparencies will soon become a necessary teaching aid. This set includes over 200 map transparencies ranging from the first Native Americans to the end of the Cold War, covering wars, social trends, elections, immigration, and demographics. Included are a reproducible set of student map exercises, teaching tips, and correlation charts. This extensive map package provides *complete* geographic coverage of American history.

***Discovering American History Through Maps and Views.*** Created by Gerald Danzer of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the recipient of the AHA's 1990 James Harvey Robinson Prize for his work in the development of map transparencies, this set of 140 four-color acetates is a unique instructional tool. It contains an introduction on teaching history through maps and a detailed commentary on each transparency. The collection includes cartographic and pictorial maps, views and photos, urban plans, building diagrams, and works of art.

***America Through the Eyes of Its People: A Collection of Primary Sources, Revised Edition.*** This one-volume collection of primary documents portrays the rich and varied tapestry of American life. It contains documents by women, Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and others who helped to shape the course of U.S. history. These documents and accompanying student exercises are designed to be duplicated by instructors for student use. This revised edition includes more social history and regional materi-

als and has been reformatted so that it is easier to use.

***A Guide to Teaching American History Through Film.*** Written by Randy Roberts of Purdue University, this guide provides instructors with a creative and practical tool for stimulating classroom discussion. The sections include "American Films: A Historian's Perspective," a list of films, practical suggestions, and bibliography. The film listing is presented in narrative form, emphasizing connections between each film and the topics being discussed.

***American Impressions: A CD-ROM for U.S. History.*** This unique and ground-breaking CD-ROM for the U.S. History course is organized in a topical and thematic framework which allows in-depth coverage with a media-centered focus. Hundreds of photos, maps, works of art, graphics, and historical film clips are organized into narrated vignettes and interactive activities to create a tool for both professors and students. The first volume includes: "The Encounter Period," "Revolution to Republic," "A Century of Labor and Reform," and "The Struggle for Equality." A Guide for Instructors provides teaching tips and suggestions for using advanced media in the classroom. The CD-ROM is available in both Macintosh and Windows formats.

***Visual Archives of American History, Second Edition.*** This two-sided video laserdisc explores history from the meeting of three cultures to the present. It is an encyclopedic chronology of U.S. history offering hundreds of photographs and illustrations, a variety of source and reference maps—several of which are animated—plus 50 minutes of video. For ease in planning lectures, a manual listing barcodes for scanning and frame numbers for all the material is available.

***Video Lecture Launchers.*** Prepared by Mark Newman of the University of Illinois at Chicago, these video lecture launchers (each two to five minutes in duration) cover key issues in American history from 1877 to the present. The launchers are accompanied by an Instructor's Manual.

***"This Is America" Immigration Videos.*** Produced by the American Museum of Immigration, these two 20-minute videos tell the story of American immigrants, relating their personal stories and accomplishments. These videos show the richness and strength contributed to America by millions of immigrants.

***Transparencies.*** A set of over 30 four-color map transparencies drawn from the text.

***Test Bank.*** This test bank, prepared by Larry Peterson of North Dakota State University, contains more than 2,000 test items, including multiple-choice, true/false, essay questions and map exercises. The questions are keyed to topic, difficulty level, cognitive type, and relevant text page.

***TestMaster Computerized Testing System.*** This flexible, easy-to-master computer test bank includes all the test items in the printed test bank. The TestMaster software allows you to edit existing questions and add your own items. Tests can be printed in several different formats and can include figures such as graphs and tables. Available for IBM and Macintosh computers.

***QuizMaster.*** This new program enables you to design TestMaster generated tests that your students can take on a computer rather than in printed form. QuizMaster is available separately from TestMaster and can be obtained free through your sales representative.

***Grades.*** A grade-keeping and classroom management software program that maintains data for up to 200 students.

## For Students

***Study Guide and Practice Tests.*** This two-volume study guide, co-authored by Ken L. Weatherbie of Del Mar College and Billy Hathorn of Laredo Community College, is designed to provide students with a comprehensive review of text material and to encourage application and critical analysis. Each chapter contains a chapter overview, learning objectives, important glossary terms, identification, map and critical thinking exercises, and multiple-choice and essay questions.

***SuperShell II Computerized Tutorial.*** Prepared by Ken L. Weatherbie of Del Mar College, this interactive program for IBM computers helps students learn major facts and concepts through drill and practice exercises and diagnostic feedback. SuperShell II provides immediate correct answers, the text page number on which the material is discussed, and a running score of the student's performance.

***Learning to Think Critically: Films and Myths About American History.*** Randy Roberts and Robert May of Purdue University use well-known films such as *Gone with the Wind* and *Casablanca*

to explore some common myths about America and its past. Many widely held assumptions about our country's past come from or are perpetuated by popular films. Which are true? Which are patently not true? And how does a student of history approach documents, sources, and textbooks with a critical and discerning eye? This short handbook subjects some popular beliefs to historical scrutiny in order to help students develop a method of inquiry for approaching the subject of history in general.

***Mapping American History: Student Activities.*** Written by Gerald Danzer of the University of Illinois at Chicago, this free map workbook for students features exercises designed to teach students to interpret and analyze cartographic materials as historical documents. The instructor is entitled to a free copy of the workbook for each copy of the text purchased from Longman.

***TimeLink Computer Atlas of American History.*** This atlas, compiled by William Hamblin of Brigham Young University, is an introductory software tutorial and textbook companion. This Macintosh program presents the historical geography of the continental United States from colo-

nial times to the settling of the West and the admission of the last continental state in 1912. The program covers territories in different time periods, provides quizzes, and includes a special Civil War module.

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*John A. Garraty*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**John A. Garraty** is Gouverneur Morris Professor of History Emeritus at Columbia University. He received his B.A. from Brooklyn College, an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Columbia, and an L.H.D. from Michigan State University, where he taught before joining the Columbia faculty. Professor Garraty is the author and editor of scores of books and articles, among them biographies of Silas Wright, Henry Cabot Lodge, Woodrow Wilson, and George W. Perkins. He contributed a volume, *The New Commonwealth*, to the New American

Nation series. He edited *Quarrels That Have Shaped the Constitution*, Supplements 4 through 7 of the *Dictionary of American Biography*, and *The Reader's Companion to American History*. He is also the author of *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About American History*. Professor Garraty has served as vice president and head of the teaching division of the American Historical Association. His areas of special research interest include the Gilded Age, unemployment (in a historical sense), and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

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