American History 150 Facts

Important dates

1. Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement, was founded in 1607.
2. The Pilgrims arrived and signed the Mayflower Compact in 1620.
3. The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776.
4. The Constitution of the United States was written in 1787.
5. President Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803.
6. The Civil War was fought from 1861-1865.

Important Places and Events

1. The first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington/Concord, Massachusetts in April 1775.
2. The Battle of Saratoga was the turning point of the American Revolution.
3. The colonial troops endured the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge.
4. The British defeat at Yorktown, Virginia by George Washington’s troops signaled the end of the American Revolution.
5. The first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, in South Carolina.
6. The Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point in the Civil War for the North. Confederate troops were forced to retreat and never invaded the North again.
7. The capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi by the North in 1863, effectively split the Confederacy in two and gave control of the Mississippi River to the Union.
8. Appomattox Court House is the small town in Virginia where Robert E. Lee surrendered the Confederate Army to Ulysses S. Grant ending the Civil War.

Important Vocabulary

1. Mercantilism is an economic theory that a country’s strength is measured by the amount of gold it has, that a country should sell more than it buys and that the colonies exist for the benefit of the Mother Country.
2. An abolitionist was a person who wanted to end slavery in the United States.
3. A tariff is a tax on goods brought into a country.
4. A protective tariff is a tax placed on goods from another country to protect the home industry.
5. Sectionalism is a strong sense of loyalty to a state or section instead of to the whole country.
6. Manifest Destiny is the belief that the United States should own all of the land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
7. The Temperance movement was a campaign against the sale or drinking of alcohol.
8. Representative government is a system of government in which voters elect representatives to make laws for them.
9. A constitutional republic is a form of government whose representatives derive their authority from the consent of the governed, serve for an established tenure, and uphold the Constitution. .
10. The House of Burgesses was the first representative assembly in the new world.
11. The three branches of government are the Legislative Branch, the Judicial Branch, and the Executive branch.
12. Checks and Balances is a system set up by the Constitution in which each branch of the federal government has the power to check, or control, the actions of the other branches.
13. Free Enterprise is the freedom of private businesses to operate competitively for profit with minimal government regulation.
14. Federalism is the sharing of power between the states and the national government.
15. Separation of Powers is a system in which each branch of government has it’s own powers.
16. Popular Sovereignty is the practice of allowing each territory to decide for itself whether or not to allow slavery.
17. Amend means to change.
18. Unalienable rights are rights that cannot be given up, taken away or transferred. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, are some of those rights.
19. Tyranny is a cruel and unjust government.
20. A Democracy is a form of government that is run for and by the people, giving people the supreme power.
21. Ratify means to approve by vote.
22. Judicial Review is the right of the Supreme Court to judge laws passed by Congress and determine whether they are constitutional or not.
23. Civil Disobedience is the refusal to obey a government law or laws as a means of passive resistance because of one’s moral conviction or belief.
24. Federalists were supporters of the Constitution who favored a strong national government.
25. Anti-federalists were people opposed to the Constitution, preferring more power be given to the state governments than to the national government.
26. Nullification is the idea of a state declaring a federal law illegal.
27. Primary Sources are the original records of an event. They include eyewitness reports, records created at the time of an event, speeches, and letters by people involved in the event, photographs and artifacts.
28. Secondary Sources are the later writings and interpretations of historians and writers. Often secondary sources, like textbooks and articles, provide summaries of information found in primary sources.
29. Republicanism was an attitude toward society in the late 1700s based on the belief that the good virtue and morality of the people was essential to sustain the republican form of government.
30. Industrial Revolution was the era in which a change from household industries to factory production using powered machinery took place.

Important Documents and Policies

1. The Magna Carta, signed in 1215 by King John, was the first document that limited power of the ruler.
2. The English Bill of Rights protected the rights of English citizens and became the basis for the American Bill of Rights.
3. The Mayflower Compact was the agreement signed in 1620 by the Pilgrims in Plymouth, to consult each other about laws for the colony and a promise to work together to make it succeed.
4. The Fundametal Orders of Connecticut (1639) was a constitution for the colonial government of Hartford and gave men more voting rights and made more men eligible to run for elected positions.
5. The Treaty of Paris of 1763 ended the French and Indian War and effectively kicked the French out of North America.
6. The Proclamation of 1763 stopped colonial settlers from moving west of the Appalachian Mountains.
7. The Stamp Act (1765) placed taxes on newpapers, legal documents, playing cards, and dice.
8. The Intolerable Acts (1774) were a series of laws passed to punich Boston for the Tea Party.
9. The Declaration of Independence (1776) was a document written by Thomas Jefferson, declaring the colonies independence from England.
10. *Common Sense* (1776) was a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine to convince colonists that it was time to become independent from Britain.
11. The Articles of Confederation (1777) was the first American constitution. It was a very weak document that limited the power of the Congress by giving states the final authority over all decisions.
12. The Treaty of Paris of 1783 ended the American Revolution and forced Britain to recognize the United States as an independent nation.
13. The Great Compromise (1787) created two houses of Congress. One based on population, the other gave equal representation to each state.
14. The Three-Fifths Compromise (1787) stated that three-fifths of slaves would be counted for representation.
15. The Northwest Ordinance (1787) was a policy of establishing the principles and procedures for the orderly expansion of the United States.
16. The Federalist Papers (1787-88) were a series of essays written by James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton, defending the Constitution and the principles on which the government of the United States was founded.
17. The Constitution of the United States (1787) sets out the laws and principles of the government of the United States.
18. The Bill of Rights (1791) is the first ten amendments to the Constitution and detail the protection of individual liberties.
19. George Washington’s Farewell Address (1796) advised the United States to stay “neutral in its relations with other nations” and to avoid “entangling alliances.”
20. The Missouri Compromise (1820) prohibited slavery in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36°30′ north except within the boundaries of the proposed state of Missouri.
21. The Monroe Doctrine (1821) was a foreign policy statement by President James Monroe stating that 1) the U.S. would not interfere in European affairs, and 2) that the western hemisphere was closed to colonization and/ or interference by European nations.
22. Compromise of 1850 California to enter as a free state, voters in the New Mexico and Utah territories could vote on the question of slavery, the slave trade ended in D.C., settled the border between Texas and New Mexico, and included the Fugitive Slave Act.
23. The Fugitive Slave Act (1850) required all citizens to help catch runaway slaves.
24. Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address (1861) stated that, “no state…can lawfully get out of the Union”, but pledged there would be no war unless the South started it.
25. Jefferson Davis’s Inaugural address (1861) stated the reasons for the secession of Southern states from the Union, upheld the belief of states’ rights and legalize slavery.
26. The Homestead Act (1862) gave an applicant ownership at no cost to farmland called a "homestead" – typically 160 acres of undeveloped federal land west of the Mississippi River.
27. The Morrill Act (1862) allowed for the creation of land-grant colleges.
28. The Gettysburg Address (1863) was a short speech given by Abraham Lincoln to dedicate a cemetery for soldiers who died at the Battle of Gettysburg. It is considered to be a profound statement of American ideals.
29. Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, setting all slaves in the Confederate states free.
30. Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (1864) was meant to help heal and restore the country after four years of Civil War.
31. The Dawes Act (1887) authorized the President of the United States to survey Indian tribal land and divide it into allotments for individual Indians. The objective of the Dawes Act was to assimilate Indians into American society. Individual ownership of land was seen as an essential step. The act also provided that the government would purchase Indian land "excess" to that needed for allotment and open it up for settlement by non-Indians.

Important People

1. Thomas Hooker was colonial leader, who founded the Colony of Connecticut.
2. William Penn established the colony of Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers.
3. Charles de Montesquieu’s the theory of separation of powers influenced the writing of the U.S. Constitution.
4. William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* influenced the legal system in the colonies and the U.S.
5. John Locke was a philosopher who believed in the protection of individual rights including life, liberty and property.
6. John Paul Jones defeated the British warship during the American Revolution. Also known as the father of the U.S. Navy.
7. Sam Adams was a member of the Sons of Liberty who started the Committee of Correspondence to stir public support for American independence.
8. John Adams was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and served a the second President of the U.S.
9. Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams was an advocate for women’s rights during the American Revolution.
10. Wentworth Cheswell, an African-American patriot, who warned colonists of the arrival of British troops.
11. Ben Franklin was an inventor, statesman, diplomat, signer of the Declaration of Independence and delegate to Constitutional Convention.
12. Mercy Otic Warren, a patriot writer was the first women historian of the Amerian Revolution.
13. James Armisted was an African American spy during the American Revolution.
14. Bernardo de Galvez sealed off the port of New Orleans so that British ships could not use the Mississippi River.
15. Cripus Attucks was the first American to die in the colonists’ fight for independence.
16. Haym Salomon lent money to the 13 colonies to finance the American Revolution.
17. King George III was the King of England who disbanded the colonial legislatures, taxed the colonies, and refused the Olive Branch Petition leading to the final break with the colonies.
18. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence; became the 3rd President of the United States and purchased the Louisiana territory, doubling the size of the United States.
19. Thomas Paine wrote pamphlets like *Common Sense* and *The Crisis* to encourage American independence and resolve.
20. George Washington was the leader of the Continental Army who became the first President of the United States.
21. John Marshall served 34 years as Chief Justiceof the Supreme Court. His most famous cases include McCulloch v. Maryland, Gibbons v. Ogden, and Marbury v. Madison, in which the court established its power of judicial review.
22. Andrew Jackson was the leader of the original Democratic Party and a “President of the people”. He was also responsible for the Trail of Tears, which forced Native Americans west of the Mississippi River.
23. John Quincy Adams, son of John and Abigail Adams, won the controversial Presential election of 1824 against Andrew Jackson.
24. John C. Calhoun was a South Carolina Congressman and Senator who spoke for the South before and during the Civil War.
25. Henry Clay was a powerful Kentucky Congressman and Senator who proposed the American System and wrote the Compromise of 1850.
26. Daniel Webster was a Massachusetts Congressman and Senator who spoke for the North and the preservation of the Union.
27. William Carney was the first African American to be awarded the Medal of Honor.
28. Philip Bazaar was a Chilean seaman who won the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Civil War.
29. Jefferson Davis was the President of the Confederacy during the Civil War.
30. Ulysses S. Grant was the General of the Union Army and was responsible for winning the Civil War for the North.
31. Robert E. Lee was the General of the Confederate Army.
32. Stonewall Jackson was a veteran of many Civil War battles and skirmishes. He was revered by the Confederate armies of the South, not only for his years of dedicated military service but also for his repeated displays of bravery and valor.
33. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States who successfully put the Union back together only to be assassinated 5 days after the Civil War ended.
34. Hiram Rhodes Revels became the first African Americn to be elected to the U.S. Senate.
35. Alexander Hamilton was a leader of the Federalists, first Treasurer of the United States, creator of the Bank of the U.S., and killed in a duel by the Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr.
36. Patrick Henry was a passionate patriot who became famous for his fiery speeches in favor of American independence. His most famous quote included the words, “Give me liberty or give me death!”
37. James Madison is considered to be the “Father of the Constitution”.
38. Frederick Douglass was a former slave who became the best-known black abolitionist in the country.
39. James Monroe was the author of the Monroe Doctrine, which shut down the western hemisphere to European expansion or interference.
40. Harriet Tubman was an escaped slave who became a Conductor on the Underground Railroad and helped over 300 slaves to freedom in the North.
41. Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention creating the Women’s Rights Movement in the United States.
42. Susan B. Anthony dedicated her life to the women’s suffrage movement. Along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she founded the National American Women Suffrage Association and the American Equal Rights Association.
43. Hudson River School paintings reflect three themes of America in the 19th century: discovery, exploration, and settlement. The paintings also depict the American landscape as a pastoral setting, where human beings and nature coexist peacefully.
44. John James Audubon illustrated a collection of 435 life size prints of America birds. Today the Audubon Society, founded by George Bird Grinnell, continues John James Audubon’s spirit of protecting birds and their habitats. John James Audubon’s illustrations and life story help to describe the spirit of young America.

Amendments to the Constitution

1. The First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law” restricting freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition.
2. The Second Amendment guarantees the right of states to organize militias, or armies, and the right of individuals to bear arms.
3. The Third Amendment forbids the government to order private citizens to allow soldiers to live in their homes.
4. The Fourth Amendment requires that warrants be issued if property is to be searched or seized (taken) by the government.
5. The Fifth Amendment protects an accused person from having to testify against him or herself (self-incrimination); bans double jeopardy, and guarantees that no person will suffer the loss of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.
6. The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a speedy public trial by an impartial jury; the right to a lawyer; the right to cross examine witnesses; and the right to force witnesses at a trial to testify.
7. The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a jury trial in civil suits.
8. The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishment and excessive bail or fines.
9. The Ninth Amendment states that the people have rights other than those specifically mentioned in the Constitution.
10. The Tenth Amendment states that powers not given to the federal government belong to the states.
11. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery.
12. The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees citizenship and rights to all people born or naturalized in the United States.
13. The Fifteenth Amendment guarantees the right to vote to all citizens regardless of race.

Supreme Court Cases

1. Marbury v. Madison was the 1803 Court decision that gave the Supreme Court the right to determine whether a law violates the Constitution. It set up the principle of judicial review.
2. In McCulloch v. Maryland (1819), the Supreme Court ruled that states had no right to interfere with federal institutions within state borders.
3. In Gibbons v. Odgen (1824), the Supreme Court upheld the power of the federal government to regulate interstate commerce.
4. Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857) was the Supreme Court decision that said slaves were property and not citizens.

Reform Movements

1. Abolitionist movement fought to end slavery in the United States prior to the Civil War.
2. Women’s Suffrage movement began by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton ,who organized the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and published the *Declaration of Sentiments* calling for the social and legal equality of women. Carried forward by Lucy Stone who began speaking out for women's rights in 1847, and organized a series of national conventions. Susan B. Anthony joined the cause in 1851 and worked ceaselessly for women's suffrage.
3. The Great Awakening was a spiritual renewal that swept the American Colonies, particularly New England, during the first half of the 18th Century.
4. **Second Great Awakening** was a revival movement that expressed the idea that every person could be saved through revivals.The Second Great Awakening stimulated the establishment of many reform movements designed to remedy the evils of society.
5. Education reforms helped create statewide common-school systems in order to preserve social stability and prevent crime and poverty.
6. The American Temperance Society was formed in 1826 and urged the reduced use of alcohol due to a renewed interest in religion and morality.
7. Labor reforms campaigned against excessive hours of work (and for the eight-hour day) and for child labor laws during the 19th century.
8. Upset by the treatment of prisoners and the mentall-ill and disabled, Dorethea Dix helped improve conditions in prison and established mental hospital for the the mentally-ill.

Inventions

1. Eli Whitney – cotton gin, interchangeable parts
2. Robert Fulton – steamboat
3. Elias Howe – sewing machine
4. John Deere – steel plow
5. Cyrus McCormick – mechanical reaper
6. Samuel Morse – telegraph