An Outline of American History

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Chapter I  Globalization and the Colonization of America

Globalization starts with the discovery of America at the end of the 15th century (1492) by Columbus. As we enter the 16th century, Europe and the rest of the world begin a period of rapid change in social structure, economy, religion, and politics. It is the end of feudal civilization in Europe, and the beginning of a new, European age. Europe would see an incredible growth in wealth and power, and individual Europeans would gradually experience more economic, political and religious freedom. Of course we should remember that, for many people in the non-European world, we should remember, the 16th century the beginning of the end of their civilizations.

Early European Conquest: Spain and France

In 1492 Columbus discovered America, and shortly after that, Spain, France and later England started colonies in the Americas. The appeal of unlimited free land, rich in natural resources was very great, and these countries actively tried to explore and settle the North American continent.

The Spanish came in search of gold. They colonized Florida first and, by 1600, had colonized the American southwest, spreading their language and culture. In 1608 the French started a settlement in Eastern Canada and this became the beginning of New France, the French empire in America.
The English Colonies

In 1584 Queen Elizabeth I of England allowed a colony to be started on the east coast of America north of Spanish Florida. It was named Virginia (because Elizabeth was known as the “Virgin Queen”). Under Elizabeth, England had become a rich and powerful nation in competition with Spain and France. Also, Elizabeth had firmly established the Protestant religion (Anglican Church or Church of England) as the national religion of England. Spain and France were, of course, both Catholic, so there was also religious hostility between England and these nations.

North America became a place where these European countries would compete for colonial possessions. The spread of religion through missionary activities was also a factor in colonialism.

Under the next English King, King James I, the colony called Jamestown, in Virginia, was established (1607). This is really considered the first English colony in America. King James I of England gave the London Company the right to settle in Virginia and North Carolina, and the Plymouth Company was given the right to settle New England. In 1612 they started growing tobacco in Virginia and more and more English went there. America was becoming a good place for British merchants to invest.

New England: the Puritans

In 1620 the first group of Puritans landed in Massachusetts. They were called Puritans because they wanted to purify the Church of England (the Anglican Church), which they saw as corrupt. They were also called Separatists, because they wanted to separate from the Anglican Church. Their purpose in coming to America was to start a religious community. The Puritans were a product of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. This was a time when, not only Puritans, but many people saw hope for freedom from the old social and political systems in Europe, like the Church or the monarchy.
The first Puritans arrived in America on the ship, The Mayflower (Dec., 17, 1620).

In 1629 a larger group of 400 came to start the Massachusetts Bay Colony around Boston and Salem. They were then followed by a great migration of mostly English Puritans.

In 1620, a ship of 102 Puritans landed in Massachusetts after a 65 day journey across the Atlantic Ocean, and set up the Plymouth Colony there. Massachusetts’s winters are very severe and about half of them died in the first winter. However, an Indian named Squanto (who could speak English before they arrived!) taught them how to plant corn and where to fish and hunt. In the fall, after their first harvest, they had a feast (1621) which was the first “Thanksgiving.”

In 1629 other Puritans came to start the Massachusetts Bay Company (Boston). This was the start of the Puritan migration; by 1640 more than 20,000 had come to New England. Many of its members were quite wealthy and many highly educated. Unlike the Virginia colony, the leaders of the New England Puritans wanted to make a religious community that strictly followed “God’s laws.” They saw a need for higher education for the training of clergy, and in 1636, a wealthy colonist, John Harvard, help to start Harvard College.
Social Stresses: the Salem Witch Trials

In 1692 a kind of hysteria took over the people living in the village of Salem, Massachusetts. They believed there were witches among them, and 14 women and 6 men are executed. Later on, they realized that they had executed innocent people.

This community of Puritans came under many social as well as environmental stresses and eventually died out or became absorbed in the growing communities started by the Massachusetts Bay Company. Eventually these first New England Puritan communities died out.

The 13 British colonies in North America
Historical and Economic Context:
British Mercantilism and Colonialism

The American colonies were part of a European system of trade called **mercantilism**. Mercantilism is an economic policy where a nation’s government tries to actively protect domestic markets (merchants and industries). It does this by restricting imports (through heavy tariffs/duties and shipping regulations). This policy also encourages exports because this will mean more money coming in and less flowing out. If necessary, military power (war) was used to enforce mercantilist policies.

Ships built in New England sailed all over the world in the expanding colonial trade markets and routes. In the case of North America, British colonies produced lumber, tobacco, rice, indigo, and in sugar in the West Indies (the Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Cuba).

By the 18th century, what some people call the “triangular trade” developed. This was a system of highly profitable trade routes between the
Caribbean islands, the British colonies on the east coast of North America, England, the “wine islands” of Spain (Madeira) and Africa (for slaves to work on sugar and tobacco plantations).

Great Britain became one of the richest countries in the world thanks to colonialism and mercantilism. The rise of the British East India Company as the most powerful and world’s richest company is an example of the success of both mercantilism and colonialism.

Ships of the British East India Company. North America was one of the major importers of Indian tea.
The Middle Colonies
The Southern Colonies Develop

The people of Virginia grew tobacco as its cash crop. Tobacco was enormously popular in Europe and this helped bring great wealth into America’s southern colonies. Tobacco, and also rice cultivation, required a large labor force, more than was available from whites or Indians. In the 17th century blacks were shipped from Africa to work on southern plantations as well as plantations on Caribbean islands (the West Indies). The first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619 (on a Dutch ship). By the mid-18th century about 20% of the population of America was African-American.
The Carolinas were given to some private merchants in 1634 and grew quickly and became two colonies (North and South Carolina) in 1729. North Carolina was mostly small farms, but South Carolina has a large number of big plantations.

In 1732 King George II gave land to a group of wealthy men north of Spanish Florida. This new colony was therefore called Georgia. Like the other southern colonies, Georgia rapidly grew and became a colony in 1752.

Summary: Colonial America

~~In general, the northern colonies had a stronger emphasis on education and religion, and in the southern colonies agricultural grew thanks to the labor of black slaves. Slavery was not legal in the northern colonies.

~~After 1680, in addition the British, there was a lot of immigration from many countries to North America. Large numbers of people came from France, Germany and Holland and other countries, particularly in Northern Europe.

~~England was becoming the most powerful country in the world, and, in North America was gradually pushing out the French and Dutch to become the main colonial power there.
The Road to Revolution: the French and Indian War

As the British colonies spread west they came into conflict with the French, particularly in the region of the Ohio Valley. The governor of Virginia organized a group of citizens (led by George Washington) to fight the French. It is called the French and Indian War because Indians were helping out on both sides.

This conflict spread beyond America when, in 1756, England and France declared war on each other in Europe. When the British finally captured the cities of Quebec and Montreal in New France (1760), the French finally surrendered. As a result of this victory over the French, the British colony of Canada was established in 1763.

Two very important consequences of this war:
1) It helped to unite the 13 colonies and gave them a sense of their own power.
2) The debts from the war led to higher British taxes which, later on, made the Americans desire independence from England.
The American Revolution

By the end of the French and Indian war, Britain had emerged as the most powerful country in the world. However, the cost of having a large army meant that Britain had to raise money. One way to do this was to force the colonists to pay taxes on imports into the colonies, like tea, sugar, coffee, cloth and wine. The rich and powerful merchants of America, as well as the common people did not, however, want to have to pay British taxes.

No “taxation without representation,” they complained. They resented Britain trying to take away the great wealth colonies from the colonies without any political representation in London.

Resentment towards Britain and British soldiers in America began to grow. When a group of British soldiers in Boston fired on a crowd of protesters (March 5, 1770) people in Boston rioted. This was the famous “Boston Massacre.”
The Boston Massacre

Then, in 1773, Britain passed a law called the Tea Act, and this pushed the colonists to take action to protest British control of the American colonies. American merchants felt that the Tea Act would result in a monopoly by the East Indian Company and, in protest; tea was thrown from British ships into Boston Harbor. This was the famous “Boston Tea Party” which symbolized America’s determination to be free from British rule. The Boston Tea Party made the British so angry that they started to make even stricter laws in an effort to control their American colonies.

American colonists dressed as Indians throw British tea into Boston Harbor (“The Boston Tea Party”)
More British control, of course, only made the American colonists angrier at the British. They became even more united in their desire for independence.

In 1775 fighting started, and in July of 1776 the American Congress met in Philadelphia to formally declare independence from Britain. A document called the "Declaration of Independence" was written and signed which can be considered as the birth of the United States. It stated the principles of democracy and called for revolution using force in order to gain political freedom. Every 4th of July in America is as Independence Day to celebrate the day America formally declared its independence as a separate nation. (see picture below)


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IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

1776年 7月 4日、第2回大陸会議（連合会議）決議アメリカ合衆国13州の満場一致の宣言

人的嘗みにおいて、ある人民にとって、他の人民と結びつけてきた政治的な絆（きずな）を解消し、自然の法や自然の神の法によってその資格を与えられている独立した、対等の地位を地上的各国のうちに得ることが必要となるとき、人類の意見をしかるべき尊重するならば、その人民を分離へと駆り立てた原因を宣言することが必要とされるだろう。我らは以下の諸事実を自明なものと見なす。すべての人間は平等につくられている。創造主によって、生存、自由そして幸福の追求を含むある侵すべきからさる権利を与えられている。これらの権利を確実なものとするために、人は政府という機関をもつ。その正当な権力は被統治者の同意に基づいている。いかなる形態であれ政府がこれらの目的にとって破壊的となるときには、それを改めまたは廃止し、新たな政府を設立し、
人民にとってその安全と幸福をもたらすのに最もふさわしいと思える仕方でその政府の基礎を据え、その権力を組織することは、人民の権利である。

確かに分別に従えば、長く根を下ろしてきた政府を一時の原因によって軽々に変えるべきでないということになるだろう。事実、あらゆる経験の示すところによれば、人類は害悪が忍びうるものである限り、慣れ親しんだ形を廃することによって非を正そうとするよりは、堪え忍ぼうとする傾向がある。しかし、常に変わらず同じ目標を追求しての権力濫用（乱用）と権利侵害が度重なり、人民を絶対専制のもとに帰せしめようとする企図が明らかとなるとき、そのような政府をなげうち、自らの将来の安全を守る新たな備えをすることは、人民にとっての権利であり、義務である。

これら植民地が堪え忍んできた苦難はそうした域に達しており、植民地をしめてこれまでの統治形態の変更を目指すことを余儀なくされる必要性をまた果たしである。今日の（スコットランド・イングランド・ウェールズの三地方から成る）グレートブリテン国王の歴史は、繰り返された侮辱と権利侵害の歴史であり、その事例はすべてこれらの諸邦に絶対君主制を樹立することを直接の目的としている。それを証明すべく、偏見のない世界に向かって一連の事実を提示しよう。公共の利益のために最も妥当かつ必要な法律に裁可を与えることを拒否した。緊急かつ切迫した要がある法律を通してさせることを総督に禁じ、総督を
して国王の裁可が得られるまでその権能において保留させることを課し、そのようにして保留させた上で（裁可すべき）法を全く閑却（かんきゃく＝いい加減に）した。

広範な地域の人民のための他の法を通過させることを拒み、その人民に本国の立法府において代表される権利を放棄することを求める。そのような権利は人民にとってかけがえのないものであり、これを恐れるのは専制君主のみである。立法府を普通でない、公文書の保管所からも離れた不便な地に召集した。疲弊（ひへい）させることにより本国の施策に従わせんとするためである。人民の権利の侵害に対し断固とした雄々しい（おおしい＝力強い）決意をもって反対した代議院をたびたび解散した。そのような解散ののち、長きにわたって新たな代議員が選出されるようにはかうことを拒否した。これにより、消減することのない立法権限は人民全体にその行使が返還されたのである。その間もその邦は外からの侵略、内なる騒乱のあらゆる危険にさらされていたのである。

これら諸邦の人口を抑制せんと努めた。その目的のために外国人帰化諸法を妨害し、この地への移民を促進する他の諸法の通過を拒み、新たな土地の割り当ての条件をつり上げた。司法権を確立させる諸法への裁可を拒否することにより、司法の執行を妨害した。判事を、その地位、俸給額、俸給の支払いについて、己の意志にのみ依存せしめた。

おびただしい数の新たな官職を創設し、この地へ官吏の大群を送って我らが人民を悩ませ、我らが物資を蚕食（さんしょく＝カイコが桑の葉を食うように端から次第に奥深く他の領域を侵略すること）た。平時において我らのうちに、我らの立法府の同意なく常備軍を駐留させた。軍部を文民権力から独立させ、それに優越させようと努めた。我らを、我らが国制にとって異質で我らが法によって認められていない権限のもとにおくべく（本国議会と）共謀し、本来の権能を逸脱した立法府の下記の目的の諸法に裁可を与えた。

George Washington

The British army and navy were the strongest in the world at that time, and the war was a long and hard one. Eventually the British gave up the fight, mostly because it was hard for them to fight so far from home in an environment very different from Europe.
France was an enemy of Britain at this time and greatly supported the colonists in their fight for independence. In 1783 the Treaty of Paris was signed giving the colonies independence from England.

Creating a New Nation: The United States Constitution

The Treaty of Paris gave the American colonies the right to govern themselves, but the hard work of building a republic had to begin. The great challenge was how to form a government which would unite 13 separate colonies into one republic. In 1787 representatives from all over the former colonies were sent to Philadelphia to write a constitution, which would serve as the legal framework for a new system of government.

On September 17, 1787, after much debate and with compromises, a constitution was accepted creating a republic with two levels of government—state and national—but with a strong central federal government having ultimate power over the states.
The U.S. federal government is divided into three branches—the executive (=the president and his cabinet), the legislative (the two houses of the Senate and Congress), and the judicial (the court system with the Supreme Court at the top). This simple but elegant system was designed to make sure no single branch of government got too much power. The “founding fathers” of the U.S.A. were concerned that the president might become too powerful like a king, so the two other branches were given powers which could prevent this from happening.

In addition to establishing the United States system of government, the writers of the constitution also added 10 amendments, called the Bill of Rights. These 10 amendments protect American’s basic legal and human rights, such as the right to follow any religion, the right of free speech, the right to a trial by a jury with a lawyer, and the right to own a gun. These constitutional protections are a basic part of American social life, now as in the past.

The U.S. Constitution has served for more than two hundred years as the basic framework for American society. Although it has been changed or added to over time, the basic principles of democracy (rule by the people) have not changed. However, the fundamental problem of whether to give more power to the states or to the central government remains even now a major theme in American political life.
The 19th Century and Westward Expansion

The famous **Lewis and Clark Expedition** was sent to explore the new lands for America and go on as far as the Pacific Ocean. They crossed the Rocky Mountains and then followed the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean, returning to St. Louis in 1806.
The expedition of Lewis and Clark opened up the **Oregon Trail**, and in 1841 the first covered wagons left Missouri and went north along the Platte River for the 6 months journey to Oregon. In 1843 the Oregon territory was settled with its own government and schools. More and more pioneers went west along the Oregon Trail, settling in the fertile lands of Washington and Oregon. Little by little these American pioneers replaced the British merchants who had trading stations there.

![The Oregon Trail](image-url)

The **Oregon Trail**

![Covered wagon](image-url)

Covered wagon

**The Great Plains**

![The Great Plains](image-url)
At this time, the population of the United States was increasing at a very fast pace, and cities were growing at a tremendous rate, especially in the north. The Great Plains seemed like a difficult place to farm so many people became interested in moving past them to the Pacific region. Soon a trade route extended across this dry region of the American west and on to the Pacific coast, to places like Los Angeles and to San Diego in southern California. An active China trade between New York and Canton made the west coast an important port for ships on their way to Asia.

The event which really sped up development of the west was the discovery of gold in 1848 in northern California. This started an immediate rush of people to who went the west coast to try to make a quick fortune. People with money came by sea, and port towns all over the California coast boomed. San Francisco became a boom town almost overnight. People with less money came over land, increasing the growth of trails and towns throughout the western frontier.

The Native American Indians

Some Americans were concerned about the condition of the American Indians (Native Americans), but most were not. America was mostly involved with rapid growth and expansion and another problem was taking the attention of most people in the country—the problem of slavery, which led to a civil war. Native Americans were forced off their lands which the whites wanted, and sent to other places which were hard places to live—many died.
The Civil War: 1861-1865

Background

By 1804 many northern states passed laws freeing slaves who were living there. Many of the newly freed blacks in northern cities protested against slavery along with white groups and joined the movement to end slavery. Those who wanted to abolish slavery all over America were called “abolitionists.” Britain had outlawed slavery in its empire early in the 19th century. Most people in the southern states, however, believed that slavery was necessary and even natural.

The Amistad Case

In June of 1839, the small ship Amistad left Havana, Cuba with 49 African slaves to be sold in America. Three days into the journey the slaves escaped from their chains and took over the ship. The ship ended up near New York and the federal government took charge; the Africans were then accused of piracy and murder.

The abolitionists (=people fighting to end slavery) got actively involved in the Amistad case. The legal issues of the case were quite complicated but the symbolic meaning of the case was simple and clear: if the blacks were sent back to Africa it would show America’s
opposition to slavery, but if the Africans were returned to Spain it would symbolize a victory for the pro-slavery people in the South.

The case went all the way up the Supreme Court (March 1841), and the court said that the Africans were to be freed. The main reason for this was that the slaves had been taken illegally from Africa where slavery had already been outlawed. Therefore they could not be the property of Spain (or anyone else), and, being free men, they had a right to fight for their freedom. This famous case served to increase tensions even more in America over the slavery issue. Most southerners were not happy to hear that these Africans were to be seen as human beings with equal political rights.

**Causes of the Civil War**

Behind the argument over slavery in America was another major issue--- the legal question of states’ rights. Did individual states have the right or the power to make final decisions about how their citizens should live? Or did the federal government have the ultimate authority? The South believed that the final place to decide important legal and social issues like slavery was in the states, and the federal government had no right to make laws which would take slavery away from them.

Since the North had more political power in Congress, the southern states were very nervous that they would be forced to give up their slaves. Southern politicians thought that the best thing to do to fight this situation was to make sure that the new states opening up in the West would have slavery. The political conflict got so bad that the southern states threatened to leave and start their own separate country.

To try to stop the South from leaving a number of compromises were made. None of these compromises really worked. The problem then got worse in 1854 when plans were made for the first transcontinental railroad to go through the new Kansas and Nebraska Territory. First proslavery settlers came to Kansas, but then antislavery farmers came to prevent slavery from being established there. The two groups ended up setting up different governments in
Kansas! Fighting broke out in Kansas with almost 200 people being killed.

Lincoln and the Civil War

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected president. At first he said that the South could keep slavery, but he was against slavery being allowed in any of the new territories or states in the West. Southerners, however, believed that Lincoln would really try to end slavery, and so, on December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to separate from the United States. Six other states from the Deep South soon left, and together they formed their own nation called the Confederate States of America. Then the Border States joined bringing the total to eleven states in the “Confederacy.”
The North was superior to the South in terms of economic power and even agriculture. The North had three times the population of the South, most of the railroads, and a large navy. The South had the advantage of fighting in their own country, trying to defend their own way of life.
In 1863, as the North was winning some important battles, Lincoln then stated that all slaves were to be set free, everywhere—this was his famous “Emancipation Proclamation.” This had the effect of turning the war into a struggle for freedom.

The war was a terrible one, with almost 600,000 lives lost by the time it finally ended in 1865. The country was saved, however, from being split into two different countries, and slavery was abolished in the whole of the United States. Also, the legal principle was upheld whereby the federal government, not an individual state is the final of the land.

The Industrial Revolution

The period after the Civil War was a period of rapid economic and social change. New technological inventions had big effects on society and economy, especially in transportation and telecommunications. The period of technological innovation and increased factory production is known the “Industrial Revolution.” The two biggest industries in America were petroleum and railroads.
Immigration

America is, of course, a nation of immigrants. In the 19th century the largest wave of immigrants came from immigrants (about 9,000,000), mostly from Ireland, Italy and Eastern Europe. The settled mostly in cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago. Also, on the west coast many Chinese and Japanese immigrated to California and Washington State. These new immigrants were important for the industrial revolution in America.

Chinese has come to the United States in large numbers around the time of the Gold Rush in California (1850’s), but by the 1880’s there was discrimination against them and laws were passed to limit their entry into the United States. However, Japanese were allowed to immigrate, especially to Hawaii and California. Hawaiian Japanese came to work on the sugar plantations. Most came from Hiroshima and other rural places in Japan.
By the end of the 1860’s the Chinese population in California had reached 75,000. They worked hard as laborers, or operating laundries. By 1877 anti-Chinese feelings were strong because White workers were angry that the Chinese were taking jobs away, and violent riots against the Chinese started in San Francisco’s Chinatown and spread to other places in the West. In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act banning Chinese immigration. Japanese, however, were allowed to enter the U.S. at this time to work on farms in California and sugar plantations in Hawaii.

Anti-Japanese feelings started to rise in California and, in 1908, the “Gentleman’s agreement” was worked out between president Roosevelt and the government of Japan. This said that no more Japanese laborers could come to the U.S. unless they were joining a family already there. This was the beginning of the “picture bride” period (yobikose jidai) where Japanese women would come to the U.S. to marry a Japanese man in America who needed a wife.