

2 Challenges at Home and Abroad

Section Focus

Key Terms Trans-Appalachian West
■ Whiskey Rebellion ■ Jay's Treaty
■ Pinckney's Treaty ■ right of deposit

Main Idea Washington used both firmness and restraint to assert American authority in the West and avoid war with European powers.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. What problems did the United States face in the West?
2. How did the United States stay out of European conflicts?
3. What political parties emerged in the United States?

The success of Hamilton's financial program depended on peace and on continuing trade with Great Britain. By 1793, however, another of Europe's worldwide wars had started. The United States was but a frail boat on the edge of a giant whirlpool. If it had been pulled into the conflict, the nation probably would not have survived. Washington managed to navigate the United States to a position of safety. At the same time, he asserted United States control over its western lands.

SECURING THE WEST

In 1793 Spain, Great Britain, and the Indians were all contending with Americans for the **Trans-Appalachian West**—the land between the Appalachians and the Mississippi. By the Treaty of Paris (1783), Great Britain had granted the United States the land east of the Mississippi from the Great Lakes to the 31st parallel. However, neither the Indians nor Spain felt obliged to honor the treaty. Nor did the British.

The British still occupied forts north of the Ohio River. In fact, the governor of Canada was plotting with the Indians to attack American settlements in the Northwest Territory. There the Indians hoped to establish their own nation under the protection of the British.

Spain claimed much of North America west of the Mississippi as well as the Floridas and the crucial port of New Orleans. Those westerners who had crossed the Appalachians had only one way to get their goods to market: by flatboat down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Spain was encouraging the Indians of the Southeast to resist white settlement. It was also wooing westerners with the idea that their interests lay with Spain, not the United States.

The odds seemed against the United States' taking control of the Trans-Appalachian West. Yet Washington realized the importance of this area to the security and development of the nation. His policy was to secure the West, whether by diplomacy or military action.

This sketch of a New Orleans marketplace reveals the city's ethnic diversity. **GEOGRAPHY** Why was New Orleans considered crucial to the economic development of the Trans-Appalachian West?



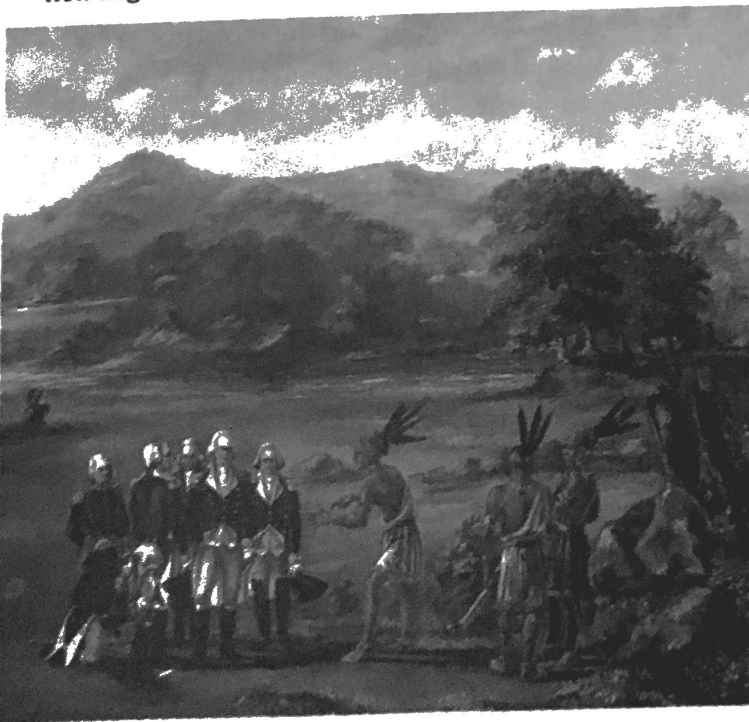
The first army Washington sent into the Ohio Valley was soundly defeated by Indians led by the Miami chief Little Turtle. Little Turtle's victory fed hopes that an Indian nation north of the Ohio was possible.

Washington sent another army west, this one headed by Anthony Wayne. Wayne was both experienced and shrewd. His men called him "Mad Anthony" because of his reputation for reckless courage. At his headquarters near present-day Cincinnati, Wayne turned his raw recruits into a sturdy, disciplined force.

Meanwhile, the British had commanded that a new fort, Fort Miami, be built on the Maumee River in Ohio. Expecting British help, Indian warriors from all over the Northwest Territory gathered at the site and prepared for battle. Learning that the war drums were beating that summer of 1794, Washington ordered Wayne to march toward Fort Miami.

As many as 2,000 Indians planned to attack Wayne's smaller force. Wayne knew that the Indians did not eat before a battle. After approaching Fort Miami, therefore, he waited for three days. The Indians got weaker and hungrier. When

Little Turtle, the Miami Indian leader, surrendered to General Wayne after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The defeat forced the Indians to abandon the Ohio area to white settlers. One of Wayne's staff painted this version of the scene. CULTURAL PLURALISM
How might Little Turtle have painted the scene differently?



Wayne finally attacked, he routed the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

In retreat, the Indians fled to Fort Miami. The British closed the gates to them. Despite the talk, the British would not help the Indians. This meant risking a war with the United States. Wayne's victory in the Battle of Fallen Timbers destroyed Indian resistance in what is now Ohio.

THE WHISKEY REBELLION

Securing the West meant dealing with the Indians, the British, and the Spanish. It also meant keeping control over frontier Americans.

At Hamilton's request, Congress had passed a tax on whiskey. Such a tax, Hamilton said, could raise needed revenue. But more than revenue was on his mind. Hamilton was searching for a way to assert the government's authority over the westerners. If the westerners were not bound to the Union, Hamilton feared they would either establish their own nation or join Spain.

Hamilton knew that the whiskey tax would affect westerners the most. After all, in the backcountry the most economical way to market grain was to turn it into whiskey. Whiskey was also a main medium of exchange. It was the money in which frontier people bought salt, sugar, nails, and ammunition. Backcountry settlers had little hard currency with which to buy goods, let alone pay the tax.

The whiskey tax produced the predicted uproar. Federal tax collectors who dared show up were attacked and chased away. State governors, with an eye on the ballot box, would do nothing about the tax rebellion. Federal authority was at stake. And so at Hamilton's urging, Washington sent an army to western Pennsylvania in the fall of 1794 to stamp out the Whiskey Rebellion.

The military exercise was a show of force. There was no real fighting. As Thomas Jefferson said, "An insurrection was announced and proclaimed and armed against, but could never be found." In the short term, the army spent much cash in the region that distillers then found it possible to pay the tax. The long-term effect, however, was to enforce federal authority, including the right of the national government to take direct action against civilians.



George Washington reviews troops of the Western Army assembled at Fort Cumberland, Maryland, to crush the Whiskey Rebellion. **CONSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE** What effect did Washington's handling of the rebellion have on federal authority?

JOLTS FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Even as Washington was trying to secure the West without provoking a British-American war, events in Europe were creating new international tensions. In the early 1790s France was in turmoil. In 1789 the French people had risen against their king and the aristocracy. Liberty, equality, fraternity—these were the goals of the French Revolution. Americans cheered, believing the French were following their own lead in striking down tyranny. Thomas Paine traveled to France to sit on the revolutionary councils. Thomas Jefferson even drafted a proposed charter and bill of rights for the new French government.

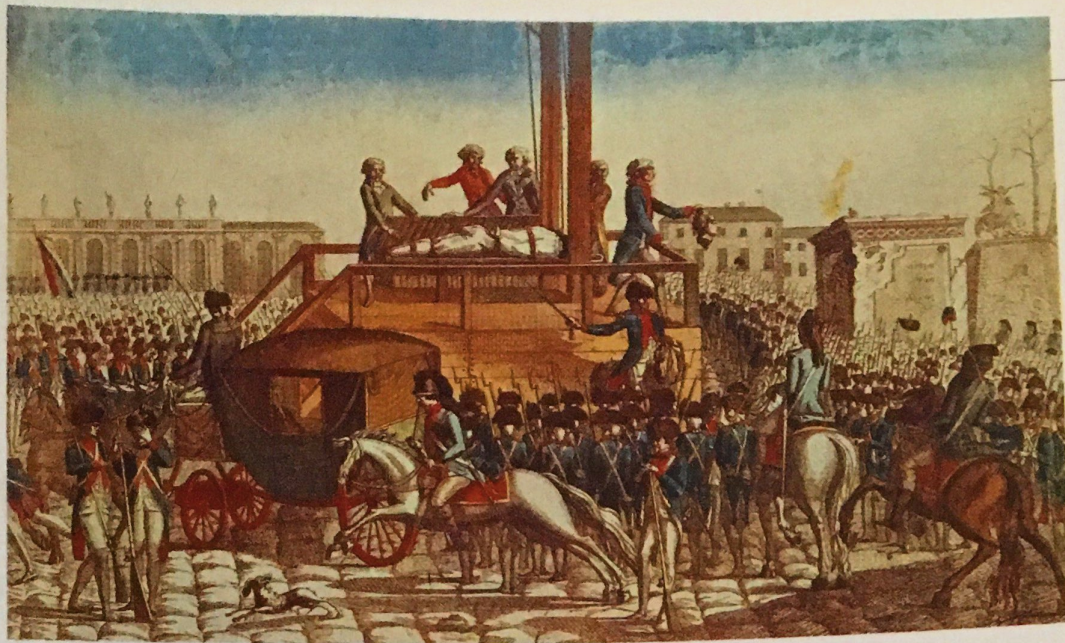
By 1793, however, a radical group called Jacobins had seized power and executed thousands of people, including the king and queen—Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. In this Reign of Terror, liberty and law disappeared. The Jacobins called for a “war of all peoples against all kings.” In response, the monarchs of Europe, including Britain, joined to defeat France and stamp out the infection of revolution.

These events divided the American people.

Growing numbers opposed the radical turn the French Revolution had taken. They agreed with Alexander Hamilton, who thought it important to maintain friendly relations with Britain. On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson and others remained pro-French. Jefferson saw the anti-French alliance as a move to stamp out republicanism everywhere.

Throughout the swirl of passion surrounding France and Britain, George Washington tried to maintain a strict neutrality. In the spring of 1793 he announced that the government would be “friendly and impartial” to both sides in the war. Congress followed that up with a law forbidding Americans from helping either side. Neutrality, however, was not popular with Americans.

In 1793 a Frenchman by the name of Edmond Genêt arrived in America, supposedly to improve relations between the two countries. But he mainly sought to undermine neutrality. Secretly encouraged by Jefferson, Genêt traveled around the country to great acclaim. Wherever he went he established Jacobin clubs, enlisting Americans in the French cause.



This painting shows the beheading of King Louis XVI in 1793 during the French Revolution. **HISTORY** Why were many Americans attracted to the cause of the French revolutionaries?

Genêt's popularity with the American people, however, caused him to become arrogant. Frustrated at Washington's continued neutrality, he did the unforgivable. He threatened to go over Washington's head to the American people. That was an insult that not even Jefferson could tolerate, and Washington demanded that France recall Genêt. Then Genêt learned that a new government in France planned to arrest him. Rather than send him home to certain death at the guillotine, Washington allowed him to stay as a private citizen.

MAINTAINING NEUTRALITY

As the year 1794 began, Washington must have found it tempting to join the French. The British had showed such contempt for neutrality that they had recently seized 250 American trading ships in the West Indies. The events of 1794, however, would strengthen Washington's hand in keeping the nation on a neutral course.

At first Washington had not thought a navy necessary. He had held to this view even when pirate states on the Barbary coast of North Africa captured American vessels and held the crews for ransom. The British seizure of American ships, however, changed his mind. Therefore, in 1794 he urged Congress to authorize a navy and the building of warships. These warships—called frigates—turned out to be the best and fastest of their type on the seas.

In early 1794 Britain backed down on its policy of seizing American ships in the West Indies.

Washington then made a countermove. He sent John Jay, who was Chief Justice, to London to negotiate the differences between the two nations. Jay's main goal was to get the British to withdraw from the Northwest Territory. During the talks, news came to London of the American victory at Fallen Timbers (page 172). The news was timely because it gave Jay more clout at the bargaining table. The result was **Jay's Treaty**, signed in late 1794.

In Jay's Treaty, Britain agreed to evacuate its posts in the Ohio Valley and retreat to the boundary line set in 1783. Britain also agreed that under certain conditions American vessels could trade in the British West Indies. Other issues, such as debts and illegal captures of ships, were to be settled by joint commissions (special committees).

Jay's Treaty was followed by another diplomatic success. This was **Pinckney's Treaty** with Spain. Negotiated by Thomas Pinckney in 1795, the treaty permitted Americans to navigate the Mississippi River. For three years westerners would also have the **right of deposit** in New Orleans. They were allowed, in other words, to store goods in New Orleans awaiting ocean transport. In addition, the Spanish agreed to accept the 31st parallel as the southern boundary of the United States. They also promised not to incite the Indians against the Americans.

Together, Jay's Treaty and Pinckney's Treaty had far-reaching effects. The United States managed to maintain its neutrality and avoid war

while upholding the territorial boundaries established in 1783. The treaties laid the basis for a western expansion unhindered by European hostility. Furthermore, they helped hold the loyalty of frontier settlers.

THE RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

By the mid-1790s, it was clear that Americans held strongly differing views about the nation's course. The split between Hamilton and Jefferson, which first came to light in the fight over a national bank, widened over the issue of the French Revolution. It eventually led to the establishment of rival political parties. Jefferson's followers were called Democratic-Republicans, or simply Republicans (no relation to the modern Republican Party). Hamilton's followers were known as Federalists. Each party had newspapers to promote its point of view and attack the opposite side.

In 1796 Washington announced in his Farewell Address that he would not serve another term as President. Distressed by Republican criticism of his policies, Washington urged the nation to avoid party politics. Political parties, he said, could harm the national interest. Yet parties became a permanent fixture of American politics.

★ Historical Documents

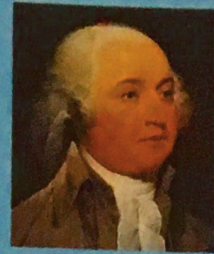
For an excerpt from Washington's Farewell Address, see page R18 of this book.

The nation paid more attention to Washington's advice on foreign policy. The United States should, he urged, avoid permanent alliances with other nations. The United States would follow this principle for the next 150 years.

John Adams was the Federalist candidate for President in 1796, and Thomas Jefferson the Republican candidate. Jefferson might have won had the French not done two things in an effort to overturn Jay's Treaty. They began attacking American merchant ships, and they openly backed Jefferson. The French efforts backfired, because Americans resented French meddling in their affairs. Adams won by three electoral votes, 71 to 68. The close vote reflected sharp divisions in American politics. These divisions would plague Adams throughout his administration.



THE PRESIDENTS



John Adams

1797–1801

2nd President, Federalist

- Born October 30, 1735, in Massachusetts
- Married Abigail Smith in 1764, 5 children
- Lawyer; delegate to First and Second Continental Congresses; Vice President under Washington
- Lived in Massachusetts when elected President
- Vice President: Thomas Jefferson
- Died July 4, 1826, in Massachusetts
- Key events while in office: XYZ Affair; Alien and Sedition Acts; French Revolution; Washington, D.C., became the nation's capital

SECTION REVIEW

- 1. KEY TERMS** Trans-Appalachian West, Whiskey Rebellion, Jay's Treaty, Pinckney's Treaty, right of deposit
- 2. PEOPLE AND PLACES** New Orleans, Little Turtle, Anthony Wayne, Fort Miami, Edmond Genêt, John Jay, Thomas Pinckney, John Adams
- 3. COMPREHENSION** What military and diplomatic actions secured the Trans-Appalachian West?
- 4. COMPREHENSION** Why did the French Revolution divide the American people?
- 5. CRITICAL THINKING** Why was George Washington willing and able to make decisions that were unpopular with large numbers of Americans?