

Chapter 21 - Thomas Jefferson First Term

Time: February 17, 1801

The Election Of 1800 Decided In The House Of Representatives



Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

State voting in the election of 1800 –extending from October 31 to December 3, 1800 – finds Adams and the Federalist Party in a state of disarray.

The President has sacked disloyal Cabinet members in May; his peace commissioners to France won't conclude a treaty until November 30, after most votes are cast; and Hamilton, the de facto head of the Party, comes out in favor of Charles C. Pinckney of South Carolina over Adams.

Hamilton's opposition to Adams is long-standing and intense. In October 1800 he attacks the President in a 54 page pamphlet, *Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams*. In this diatribe, Hamilton says that his choice is Pinckney:

Resulted from the disgusting egotism, the distempered jealousy, and the ungovernable indiscretion of Mr. Adams' temper, joined to some doubts of the correctness of his maxims of administration.

The Democratic-Republicans are delighted by the split within the Federalists and add their own attacks against Adams, especially around the Sedition Act -- which they cast as another attempt by the federal government to override individual freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Their "intended" ticket calls for Thomas Jefferson to become President, with Aaron Burr as his Vice-President.

When the electors gather to vote on February 11, 1801, John Adams is able to make a race of it, despite all of his vulnerabilities. In a contest requiring at least 70 of the 138 ballots to win, he is chosen by 65 electors, only 6 less than his 1796 total.

But what follows next shocks the entire election system set up in the 1787 Constitution. Two men – Jefferson and Burr – end up in a dead tie for the top spot, with 73 votes apiece.

Results Of The 1800 Presidential Election

Candidates	State	Party	Pop Vote	Tot EV	South	Border	North
Thomas Jefferson	Virginia	Democratic-Rep	41,330	73	44	9	20
Aaron Burr	NY	Dem-Rep		73	44	9	20
John Adams	Mass	Federalist	25,952	65	4	8	53
Charles C. Pinckney	S.C.	Federalist		64	4	8	52
John Jay	NY	Federalist		1			1
Total			67,282	276	96	34	146
Needed to win				70			

Note: South (Virginia, N Carolina, S Carolina, Georgia), Border (Delaware, Maryland, Ky), North (NH, Mass, NY, NJ, Penn, RI, Conn, Vt)

Note: Total # electors = 138, each casing 2 votes = 276 total votes; must get more than half of 138 voters = 70.

This outcome throws the election into the House of Representatives, where each of the sixteen states is asked to caucus and cast one vote for either Jefferson or Burr. The winner must achieve an absolute majority of at least nine votes.

Ironically, the existing House, elected in 1798, is dominated by Federalists who enjoy a 60-46 margin. It is clear to them that the “intent” of the Democratic-Republicans is to choose Jefferson, but many actually favor Burr, who is a New Yorker, rather than another Virginian.

For eleven days in a row, across 35 ballots, the House voting is frozen, with 8 states favoring Jefferson, 6 for Burr and 2 deadlocked. Neither man is able to achieve the nine vote majority required by law.

House Voting For President: Ballots 1-35

Voting For:	South	Border	North	Total
Jefferson	Va, NC, Ga, Tenn	Ky	NY, NJ, Pa	8
Burr	SC	Del	Mass, Conn, NH, RI	6
Tie		Md	Vt	2

On February 17, 1801, just two weeks before the new President is to assume his office, none other than Alexander Hamilton steps in to push for resolution. His very public feuds with both men are legendary at this point. He has clashed with Jefferson repeatedly during his tenure as Treasury Secretary, and he holds Burr, along with James Monroe, accountable for publicizing his extra-marital affair with Maria Reynolds.

But after weighing the two in the balance, he comes down on the side of Jefferson as the lesser of two evils.

Mr. Jefferson, though too revolutionary in his notions, is yet a lover of liberty and will be desirous of something like an orderly government. Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself, thinks of nothing but his own aggrandizement. In the choice of evils, let them take the least. Jefferson is in my view less dangerous than Burr.

Though out of office, Hamilton has retained enough power to derail Adam’s re-election bid, and now he does the same against Burr. On the 36th and final ballot, his behind the scene’s voice helps move Maryland and Vermont into Jefferson’s column, while also removing South Carolina and Delaware from the Burr side.

House Voting For President: Ballot 36

Voting For:	South	Border	North	Total
Jefferson	Va, NC, Ga, Tenn	Ky, Md	NY, NJ, Pa, Vt	10
Burr			Mass, Conn, NH, RI	4
Tie	SC	Del		2

Jefferson ends up with ten votes and is named President. The Congress ends up convinced that the “election process” must change, to avoid future chaos. This leads to passage of the 12th Amendments, ratified on June 15, 1804. It ends the practice of having “electors” vote for their “two top choices” for President, and forces them to cast one ballot for President and a separate one for Vice-President.

“Ties,” of course, will still be resolved by voting in the House of Representatives, as will be seen again as early as the controversial election of 1824.

Time: 1800

The Democratic-Republicans Also Gain Control Over Both Houses Of Congress

In addition to Adams’ loss, the Federalists suffer a devastating reversal of fortune in the 1800 races for Congress.

This is particularly true in the “people’s” House, where the upward momentum they exhibited in the prior two elections comes to a screeching halt. What was a commanding 60-46 majority going into the vote, becomes a 38-68 deficit coming out.

Congressional Election Trends

House	1789	1791	1793	1795	1797	1799	1801
Democratic-Republicans	28	30	55	61	49	46	68
Federalist	37	39	50	45	57	60	38
Congress	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
President	GW	GW	GW	GW	JA	JA	TJ

Furthermore the 22 seats lost by the Federalists are spread across all regions of the country, including their historically strong home base in the North.

House Trends By Region

Democratic-Republican	Total	South	Border	North
1795	61	33	7	21
1797	49	30	4	15
1799	46	21	5	20
1801	68	30	7	31
Change	+22	+9	+2	+11
Federalists				
1795	45	5	4	36
1797	57	8	7	42
1799	60	17	6	37
1801	38	8	4	26
	(22)	(9)	(2)	(11)

This same pattern is repeated in the Senate, where the Federalist’s comfortable 22-10 majority swings over to a 15-17 minority position – again with the losses evident in all regions.

Senate Trends By Region

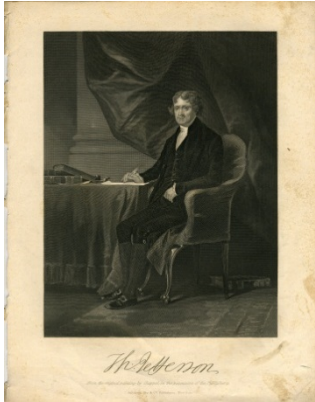
Democratic-Republican	Total	South	Border	North
1795	16	7	4	5
1797	12	8	1	3
1799	10	8	1	1
1801	17	10	3	4
Change	+7	+2	+2	+3
Federalists				
1795	14	1	2	11
1797	20	2	5	13
1799	22	2	5	15
1801	15	0	3	12
Change	(7)	(2)	(2)	(3)

History will show that the Federalist Party is never able to fully recover from the repudiation it suffers in 1800.

The nation now seems intent on tinkering with the form of government it wants – ready to move away from Hamilton’s tight federal control in the hands of a few powerful men and toward Jefferson’s more de-centralized and broadly shared option.

Time: 1743-1826

President Thomas Jefferson: Personal Profile



Thomas Jefferson (1743-1757)

Thomas Jefferson's life is noted for remarkable personal and public achievements, offset at times by intense self-indulgences and a wavering moral compass.

His father, Peter, starts from modest means, enters public service as a county surveyor and sheriff in Virginia, and along the way befriends William Randolph II and Isham Randolph, two sons of William senior, an aristocratic planter. In 1736 Peter buys 200 acres of land at Shadwell from William junior, and in 1739 he marries Isham's oldest daughter, Jane.

Thomas Jefferson is born on April 13, 1743, at Shadwell, the oldest son in a family of ten children. From birth he will benefit from the practical know-how of his father and the elite intellectual lifestyles and worldly connections of the Randolphs. The bond between Peter Jefferson and the two Randolph sons is such that both entrust him with guardianship over their younger children when they pass. In turn, Peter's wealth grows dramatically, and by 1757 he has extensive land and slave holdings at two estates, Shadwell and Snowden, Virginia.

But Peter Jefferson dies suddenly in 1757, with Thomas, age 14, inheriting his Shadwell Plantation (which includes Monticello), and his younger brother, Randolph, the land at Snowden.

Two years later, Jefferson enrolls at William & Mary College, where he graduates with high honors in two years, learning six languages and studying philosophy and science. He then masters the law under the renowned George Wythe, and goes on to pass the bar in 1767. As a lawyer, he will handle over 900 cases, mostly involving disputes over land claims.

In 1768 he begins a lifelong preoccupation with building his own land at Monticello. The effort will tap into many of his polymorphic capacities. On one day he is an architectural designer; the next an agronomist; then an inventor; a gourmet; an aesthete; a librarian; a manufacturer; a financier; and finally, a very astute capitalist. Over time, Jefferson will raise tobacco here, then switch to wheat, corn, and clover. He will build a 1200 foot canal and a grain mill for his own use and as a sideline business. He will set up a nail-making operation operated by slave children too small to work in the fields.

Other slaves will also play a crucial role in the development of Monticello and in Jefferson's accumulation of wealth. He begins in 1757 with 52 slaves inherited from his father. In 1769 he marries a widow, Martha Wayles Skelton, whose father, John, dies the following year, leaving her another 135 Africans. Included here are Betty Hemmings and her ten mixed-race children, all fathered by John Wales. Over the years at Monticello, Jefferson will own roughly 650 different

slaves, and will keep detailed notes and “observations” on their “characteristics and capacities” in his Notes On The State of Virginia.

Jefferson’s lifestyle is lavish, and he is forever in financial difficulties – including a staggering \$107,000 debt left upon his death. When in need of short-term cash, he turns to selling off his “slave property” – and some 110 such transactions are recorded in contemporary documents.

With his operations at Monticello moving along, Jefferson steps into the political arena in 1769, representing Albamarle County from then until 1775, in the Virginia House of Burgesses. In 1770 he is appointed Colonel in command of his local militia.

Jefferson joins the rebellion against the crown in 1774 after the British impose the Coercive Acts on the colonies in response to the Boston Tea Party. In 1776 he is chosen as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, where he becomes a friend of John Adams of Massachusetts. Adams uses his influence to get Jefferson to join him on the Committee of Five that writes The Declaration of Independence. His role here in expressing America’s values and vision secures his place as a future political leader.

Jefferson is not involved in actual fighting during the Revolutionary War, but does continue to oversee activities of the militia, first at the local level and then the state level, after he is elected Governor of Virginia in 1779.

On September 6, 1782, personal tragedy strikes with the death of his thirty-three year old wife, Martha, soon after delivering the couple’s sixth child. Jefferson is shattered by the loss, suffering from depression and “many a violent burst of grief.” Months will pass before he records his “emerg(ence) from that stupor of mind which had rendered me as dead to the world as was she whose loss occasioned it.”

Jefferson returns to public service as a Virginia Delegate to the Confederation Congress in 1783-84 before heading off on a four year assignment as United States Minister to France. This experience will mark him forever as an unwavering Francophile.

Joining him in Paris in 1787 will be one of his slaves, a 14 year old girl named Sally Hemings. Sally is one of the ten mixed-race offspring of the slave, Betty Hemmings, and her master, John Wayles, who was also the father of Jefferson’s now dead wife, Martha. Thus Martha Jefferson and Sally Hemmings are actually half-sisters by blood.

From this time in Paris until the end of his life, Sally will be Jefferson’s mistress, bearing six children and overseeing his domestic life at Monticello. She will be one of the only five slaves he frees in his will.

This inter-racial affair will be revealed in 1802 by Richard Callender, the same tabloid publisher who Jefferson had supported in his attacks on Adams during the 1800 presidential campaign. The Irish poet Thomas Moore follows with a witty thrust at the hypocrisy inherent in the liaison.

*The weary statesman for repose hath fled
 From halls of council to his negro's shed,
 Where blest he woos some black Aspasia's grace,
 And dreams of freedom in his slave's embrace!*

Like John Adams, Jefferson is still in Europe throughout the 1787 Constitutional Convention, where his powerful voice is missed on many occasions by his Anti-Federalist cohorts. But he generally approves the outcome, with two exceptions – a wish to add a Bill of Rights and to limit the President to one term in office.

Upon returning home, Jefferson rounds out his preparation to become President. He serves from 1790-93 as Washington's Secretary of State, then spends the next seven years organizing the Democratic-Republican Party and, by a quirk of electoral college fate, serving as John Adams' Vice President.

On March 3, 1801, his time comes to lead the nation he helped to shape twenty-five years ago.

Despite his eight years in office, the epitaph he subsequently writes for his tombstone will ignore his presidency in favor of other “testimonials I have lived, (which) I wish most to be remembered:”

*Here was buried Thomas Jefferson
 Author of the Declaration of American Independence
 of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
 & Father of the University of Virginia*

The Remarkable Lifetime Accomplishments Of Thomas Jefferson

Age	
9	Studies Latin, French and Greek
16	Enrolls at William & Mary College
23	Starts his law practice
25	Elected to Virginia House of Burgesses
31	Authors “Summary View of the Rights of British America”
32	Delegate to Second Continental Congress
33	Writes The Declaration of Independence, a revised Virginia legal code and The Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom
36	Governor of Virginia
40	Member of Confederation Congress
41	Minister to France
46	Secretary of State
51	Invents “wheel cipher” encryption machine for secret documents
52	Invents the “Jefferson agricultural plow”
53	U.S. Vice-President and president of American Philosophical Society
55	Writes “Kentucky Resolutions” and organizes his national party
57	President of the United States – first term
61	Second term as President

64	Invents a “polygraph,” a letter copying machine
68	Invents “revolving bookstand”
76	Completes the “Jefferson Bible,” capturing his views on Christianity
80	Helps shape the “Monroe Doctrine”
81	Founds The University of Virginia and serves as first president

Time: 1801-1805

Overview Of Jefferson’s First Term

Thomas Jefferson is the first President inaugurated in the new capital city of Washington, D.C. – still a primitive setting as described by John Adams’ wife, Abigail:

The President's House is in a beautiful situation...but the country around is...a wilderness at present. George Town is the very dirtiest hole I ever saw for a place of any trade, or respectability of inhabitants. It is only one mile from me but a quagmire after every rain.

Standing in front of the not yet completed Senate wing of the capitol, Jefferson is sworn in by his cousin and frequent opponent, Chief Justice John Marshal. His inaugural address is brief, reflecting his penchant away from long-winded oratory and toward concise insights delivered in the written word. After a bruising election, he opens with a conciliatory tone.

Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.

He then proceeds to articulate, with great precision, his core beliefs about good government.

It is proper you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our Government, I will compress them within the narrowest compass they will bear.

Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none; the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people...; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority, the vital principle of republics a well-disciplined militia, our best reliance in peace and for the first moments of war till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burthened; the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of the public reason;

freedom of religion; freedom of the press, and freedom of person under the protection of the habeas corpus, and trial by juries impartially selected.

These principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation. The wisdom of our sages and blood of our heroes have been devoted to their attainment. They should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or of alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

Relying, then, on the patronage of your good will, I advance with obedience to the work, ready to retire from it whenever you become sensible how much better choice it is in your power to make. And may that Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe lead our councils to what is best, and give them a favorable issue for your peace and prosperity.

Jefferson assembles a strong cabinet, led by his close confidant, James Madison, as Secretary of State.

The Treasury will be run for the next thirteen years by Albert Gallatin, whose wide-ranging accomplishments mirror Jefferson in many ways. Gallatin is born and schooled in Switzerland, an intellectual who is drawn to the Enlightenment philosophers, before coming to Boston in 1780. He teaches French at Harvard, buys land in Pennsylvania, tries his hand at farming and glassworks manufacturing, enters politics and serves in the Senate and House from 1793-1801. Along the way he becomes recognized for his mastery of public finance and the budget, which leads to his selection by the President. Gallatin is a Democratic-Republican who focuses intently on eliminating the national debt. But he also supports Hamilton's Bank of the United States and selects internal improvement projects aimed at strengthening economic growth.

With the possibility of international conflict still looming, Jefferson picks General Henry Dearborn as Secretary of War. Dearborn is a physician by training, but a veteran of Revolutionary War battles fought from Quebec to Yorktown.

Thomas Jefferson's Cabinet In 1801

Position	Name	Home State
Vice-President	Aaron Burr	New York
Secretary of State	James Madison	Virginia
Secretary of Treasury	Albert Gallatin	Pennsylvania
Secretary of War	Henry Dearborn	Massachusetts
Secretary of the Navy	Robert Smith	Maryland
Attorney General	Levi Lincoln	Massachusetts

The President enters office intending to shift the philosophy and focus of the national government.

The Federalist Adams has concentrated on unifying the original Atlantic coast states behind a strong central authority. Jefferson's sights are set on expanding west to the nation's second sea coast – the Mississippi River – and contracting federal power in favor of restored sovereignty for state and local legislatures.

His early domestic moves are modest in character. He allows the Sedition Act to sunset on his first day in office, and pardons all eleven men who have been convicted since its inception. He does away with the unpopular Whiskey Tax, and attempts to cover the loss of revenue by downsizing the Navy program begun by Adams. He pushes through another Judiciary bill, undoing Adams' attempt to limit his impact on the Supreme Court.

During the term he also sets the wheels in motion to support statehood for Ohio and other Territories in the Northwest, and convinces Georgia to cede its claims in the Southwest over to the public domain. He also sponsors a series of expeditions to explore the “unknown land” beyond the Great River.

But as with all Presidents, his actions are suddenly dictated by unpredictable events – in Jefferson's case, like Adams, related to threats of warfare.

This begins on an insignificant scale in May 1801, when Jefferson refuses to pay the Kingdom of Tripoli a bribe of \$225,000 to forestall its asserted “right and duty as faithful Muslims to plunder and enslave non-believers.” The Kingdom responds by declaring war on the U.S., followed by four years of repeated piracy and sea battles in the Mediterranean Sea. It ends in 1805, when the President sends naval vessels along with a small contingent of marines backed by local mercenaries to the region. They cross the desert from Egypt and win a decisive victory at the port city of Dema, forcing the Kingdom to sign a peace treaty. Henceforth, victory on the “shores of Triopli” will become part of the marine's heritage.

The so-called Barbary War in north Africa is, however, only a minor event relative to threats from both France and Britain that will occupy Jefferson across his entire time in office.

As Commander-in-Chief, the new President, along with the rest of the world, has his eyes fixed on the predatory figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. Only two years will pass between Adams' treaty ending the “Quasi War” with France and Napoleon's incursion into the Caribbean to suppress a slave rebellion and take back control over the sugar plantations on Saint Domingue (Haiti). When Jefferson also learns that Spain has ceded its Louisiana lands along the Mississippi to France, he fears that Napoleon will turn on America next.

Instead of waiting, he acts, and is rewarded with the pivotal achievement of his administration, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. In one fell swoop, it doubles the nation's land mass and promises to fulfill the economic vision of his inaugural speech – a nation of independent yeoman farmers with...

Room enough for our descendants to the thousandth generation

Assuming, of course, that renewed belligerence from Britain -- growing during his first term -- can be kept under control.

Jefferson's First Term: Key Events

1801	
March 4	Jefferson and Burr are sworn in
May 14	The Pasha of Tripoli declares war on the United States
December 7	The 7 th Congress convenes after big gains by Democratic-Republicans
1802	
January 8	\$2.6 million in war reparations paid by US to British Loyalists and merchants (Jay deal)
January	Napoleon sends 20,000 troops put down the black slave rebellion in Saint Dominigue
February	Treasury Sec. Gallatin secures support for road building projects in Ohio
March 8	Congress repeals the 1798 Judiciary Act
March 27	A treaty momentarily pauses the warfare raging in Europe
April 6	Congress repeals all excise taxes, including on whiskey
April 14	Congress repeals the 1798 Naturalization Act; restore a 5 year wait period, not 14 years
April 29	A new Judiciary Act restores the number of justices at six, not five
April 30	An Enabling Act defines how NW territories may organize for statehood
April	Jefferson learns that France now owns Louisiana and starts acquisition plans
June	Toussant Louverture, who led the black take-over of Saint Dominque, is captured
July 4	The US Military Academy at West Point opens
October 16	Napoleon has Spain close the port of New Orleans to US commerce
November 29	An Ohio territorial convention passes a state constitution and applies for admission
December 6	Jefferson addresses Congress stressing the need for economy in government spending
1803	
February 24	In <i>Marbury v Madison</i> the Supreme Court asserts its authority over what is lawful
March 1	Ohio is admitted to the Union (#17)
April 19	Spain re-opens the port of New Orleans to US commerce
May 2	Ambassador James Monroe signs Louisiana Purchase Treaty with French for \$15M
June 7	Tribes in Indiana cede more land to Governor William Henry Harrison
August 31	Lewis and Clark set out on their three year expedition down the Ohio and to the west
October 20	The Senate ratifies the Louisiana Purchase Treaty
October 29	The House appropriates the funding needed to buy the Louisiana land from France
November	War between France and Britain, etc. begins anew
November 18	France loses a key battle against black forces on Saint Domingue
December 9	Congress approves the 12 th Amendment to separate balloting for President and VP
December 20	The US officially takes possession of the Louisiana Territory from France
1804	
February 15	New Jersey passes law to grant gradual emancipation to slaves
February 16	Hamilton calls Vice-President Burr "a dangerous man" not to be trusted in government
March 26	The Land Grant of 1804 lowers the price to \$1.64 per acre and sets 160 acre minimum

April 25	VP Burr loses race for NY Governor in large part due to Hamilton's opposition
May 18	Napoleon crowns himself Emperor of France in Paris
July 11	Burr kills Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken, NJ
August 27	The Treaty of Vincennes cedes more Indian land in the west to the US
September 25	The 12 th Amendment is approved to separate ballots cast for President and VP
October 1	The port city of New Orleans is officially in US hands
October 27	Lewis and Clark make their winter camp near present day Bismarck, North Dakota
December 5	Jefferson is re-elected, with George Clinton as VP
December	Napoleon withdraws his troops from Saint Domingue and focuses on invading Britain
1805	
January 11	A Michigan Territory is formed out of the western part of the old Indiana Territory
January	Both Britain and France pass laws barring neutral ships to enter enemy harbors