

# People to Know

Lessons 11 & 14

## As You Read

Who:

- *What did this person do for a living?*
- *Where are they from?*

Importance:

- *What did this person accomplish that made a difference then and/or now?*
- *How did they affect others then and/or now?*

## Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams (1744-1818) grew up in a modest home. She learned from her parents and read a lot of books on her own. By adulthood, she had a firm grasp of history, politics, and the unfolding events going on around her. She married John Adams in 1764.

When war broke out between the colonies and Great Britain in 1775, Abigail Adams organized women to help supply the Continental army. While John Adams was at the Continental Congress, she sent him a letter to remind him to “remember the ladies.” Abigail Adams believed women were entitled to an education, something most women were denied.

While her husband was working for American independence, she ran the family household and kept it profitable. After the war, she went with her husband to Europe for some time and then returned home for her husband’s election to vice president and then later president. She entertained guests often discussing politics and

issues of the day. When politics were over, she and her husband retired to their farm in Massachusetts in 1801.

## Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton (1755/57-1804) served as George Washington’s chief secretary during the Revolutionary War. After the war, Hamilton opened a law office in New York City.

President Washington appointed Hamilton the first Secretary of the Treasury. First, Hamilton wanted the federal government take over all Revolutionary War debts from the states. In exchanged for Southern support, Hamilton agreed to have the national capital to be called Washington D.C. built in the South. Second, he got a bill passed that created a national bank to allow the United States government to make loans to support business growth.

Supporters of Hamilton became known as Federalists. Opponents thought Hamilton’s ideas were unconstitutional. These people, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison included, became known as Democratic-Republicans. The Federalists and Democratic-Republicans became the first two political parties in America.

## John Jay

John Jay (1745-1829) was an active politician. He became the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. By 1794, war with Britain seemed probable. Britain

blocked American goods from British ports, refused to abandon forts on United States land, and attacked American ships to take cargo and impress (force) American sailors into the British navy.

President Washington sent Jay to Britain to negotiate a treaty. The resulting Jay’s Treaty had most issues sent to arbitration. That is, allowing a neutral third party to decide issues. It did, however, avoid a war that America could not afford to fight. Although the agreement was unpopular with many Americans, Washington signed the treaty in 1795.

## John Marshall

John Marshall (1745-1829) was elected to Congress as a Federalist in 1799. In 1800, President John Adams appointed Marshall Secretary of State, and in 1801 Adams appointed him chief justice of the Supreme Court.

Marshall fully supported a powerful national government and believed strongly in John Locke’s ideas that government existed to protect life, liberty, and property. In *Marbury v. Madison*, Marshall ruled that the Supreme Court had the right to declare a law unconstitutional. In *McCulloch v. Maryland*, Marshall denied the right of states to tax federal institutions thus reinforcing the superiority of the federal government over states. Under Marshall’s leadership, the Supreme Court became a powerful branch of government able to interpret the meaning of the Constitution.

## **Sacagawea**

Sacagawea (1788-1812?) was born into the Shoshone nation in present-day Idaho. When about twelve, she and several others were taken in battle by the Hidatsa and brought to present-day North Dakota. French fur trapper Toussaint Charbonneau married her about a year later.

In 1804, Sacagawea and her husband joined the Corps of Discovery led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Sacagawea acted as an interpreter with several tribes, including the Shoshone as the expedition traveled west toward the Pacific Ocean. Her help gained valuable horses and guides from the Shoshone. On the return trip, she guided the Corps safely through the Rocky Mountains. Her presence as a woman in the party, showed the expedition's peaceful intentions with the Native Americans they met along the way.

## **Tecumseh**

Tecumseh (1768-1813) was a member of the Shawnee nation and lived in the Northwest Territory. He was a skilled warrior and political leader. As he grew up, Tecumseh watched American settlers slowly move onto land claimed by American Indian tribes. Tecumseh set about to protect American Indian land and preserve their way of life.

In the early 1800s, Tecumseh's brother, the Prophet, became a popular religious figure who attracted thousands of American Indians who were looking for a better future. Tecumseh took over the leadership role in an attempt to create an alliance among the

tribes to protect American Indian land.

Fearful of an uprising, in 1811, U.S. forces under the command of William Henry Harrison attacked and defeated American Indian forces at the Battle of Tippecanoe Creek. American Indian forces scattered and the alliance came to an end.

In the War of 1812, Tecumseh joined the side of the British in hopes of driving the Americans off of American Indian land in the Northwest. However, he failed to gain the large American Indian following he once had and was killed at the Battle of the Thames in October 1813.