

CAMBRIDGE ARCHIVE EDITIONS



AMERICA AND GREAT BRITAIN
Diplomatic Relations
1775 – 1815

BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

From colony to nation: the British perspective

[cambridge.org/cae](https://www.cambridge.org/cae)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



A UNIQUE VIEW OF A GLOBAL EVENT

America and Great Britain: Diplomatic Relations, 1775–1815, British Government Documents is a **digitised collection** of facsimile British diplomatic primary material, charting the emergence of an independent United States.

Researched and edited by A.L.P. Burdett



TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL
 DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
 IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,
 NOW RAISING UNDER
 GENERAL WASHINGTON.
 FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
 LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
 OF THE UNITED STATES,
 Against the hostile design of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE,



Comprising official diplomatic correspondence between America and Britain, the archive provides an extraordinary insight into the shaping of a nation, from the territory being referred to in 1775 by King George III as “our Colonies and Plantations in North America”, to its recognition as the “United States” by Britain in 1782 and the official cessation of hostilities in 1815.

HOW PERSONALITIES SHAPED A NATION

The correspondences are made up of an extensive collection of letters, despatches and proclamations from high-ranking British and American politicians, including a number of the Founding Fathers such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Hancock.

Together these correspondences form a narrative which not only captures major historical events from a contemporary viewpoint, but also provides a vivid, lively and uniquely personal insight into the creators of modern America.

FRANCE, BRITAIN AND AN EMERGING POWER

The collection also provides an insight into European politics during this period, as America increasingly became the subject of political intrigue for Britain and France, whose hostilities dominated Europe at the time. Conflicts between America, France and Britain arising over trade, defence and diplomacy are explored and increase our understanding of this complex trans-Atlantic triumvirate.

ILLUMINATING A NEW ERA OF DIPLOMACY

The archive is also a valuable tool in understanding an era of modernization in diplomatic practises. With the expansion of the British Foreign Office, there was a movement away from the era of the aristocratic amateur towards a more tightly controlled process, where professionalised servants of the British Crown filed regular despatches from across the world to a rigid procedure.

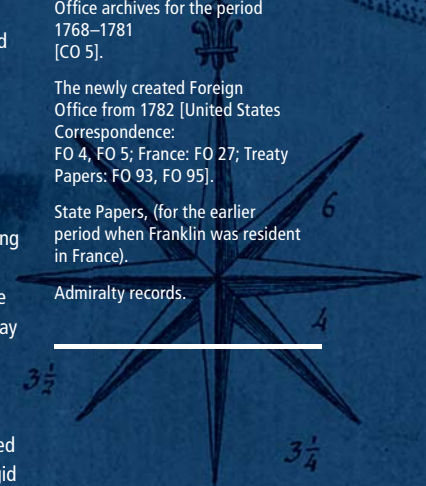
UNIQUELY BRITISH SOURCES

The documents are selected and expertly curated from: The Colonial Office archives for the period 1768–1781 [CO 5].

The newly created Foreign Office from 1782 [United States Correspondence: FO 4, FO 5; France: FO 27; Treaty Papers: FO 93, FO 95].

State Papers, (for the earlier period when Franklin was resident in France).

Admiralty records.





Valley Forge (1777–1778), by the painter William Trego. Image from Shutterstock.

PART I. INTRODUCTORY SECTION: Selected documents illustrating the development of tensions in relations between Great Britain and the American Colonies and the growing disaffection on the part of American colonists, 1768–1775.

“ they believe that (reducing tax to) 3 pence in a pound of tea... is sufficient to overcome all the patriotism of an American! ”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1. Two retrospective reports giving examples of events which reflect the increased anti-British sentiments, 1768–1772
2. Correspondence from Benjamin Franklin while in Europe as American Minister to France, mainly to Thomas Cushing, Speaker of the House in Massachusetts, detailing his political position and his attitude towards, and relations with, the British Government, 1771–1774
3. British Government policy decisions in response to the commencement of an open revolt against British rule, centred in Boston, set against initial hopes for reconciliation, February–December 1774
4. The rise of increasingly violent anti-British demonstrations, effectively seditious,

marks the beginning of the Revolutionary War; failure of the first group of British “Peace Commissioners” sent to North America to try to come to terms with the Americans, February–September 1775

5. American Congressmen make an offer of reconciliation: the “Olive Branch” Petition represents the missed opportunity to avoid the ultimate secession of the American colonies, September 1775

PART II. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, 1775–1778

6. Warfare commences late autumn 1775 with a rapid intensification of the conflict and of war measures; military and naval instructions are issued; the position of Loyalists and the role of the Peace Commission are discussed, February 1776–December 1777

7. The practical and political impact of the Franco-American alliance (initially kept secret), upon United States–Great Britain relations, 1778

PART III. DIPLOMATIC ENDEAVOURS TO OBTAIN PEACE AND A SETTLEMENT IN 1778

8. British hopes for arranging a peace through the

fully empowered Peace Commissioners, 1778

9. British Peace Commissioners propose a new type of legislative union; Congress “decidedly rejects” the British Government’s points and proposals as being incompatible with independence; arrival of a French squadron and US relations with France further reduce the chance of finding agreement, June–August 1778

PART IV. AMERICAN REJECTION OF THE INITIAL BRITISH PROPOSALS AND THE PROSPECT OF WAR WITH FRANCE AND POSSIBLY SPAIN, LEAD TO STALLING OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, WHILE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR CONTINUES, AUGUST 1778– JULY 1781.

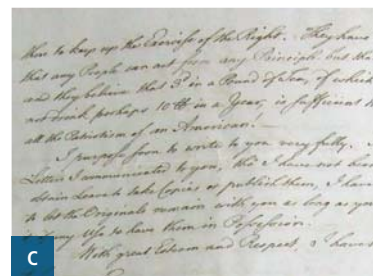
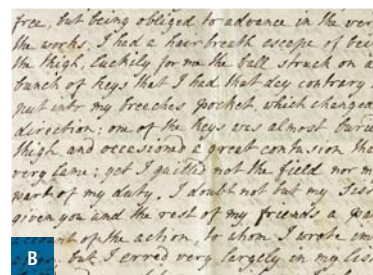
10. Any prospect of a peaceful settlement, with the United States of America still politically attached to Great Britain, rapidly diminishes, August–October 1778

11. The British Administration changes tactics by November 1778: no recognition of independence was to be granted to America by Parliament, and furthermore a settlement with the American colonies was usurped in significance by the prospect of war with France, possibly to be joined by Spain, November–December 1778

12. Separate peace made with Georgia, 1779

13. Despite the continuation of the Revolutionary Wars, the Peace Commissioners seek to encourage any Loyalists. Although South Carolina is occupied by British forces, it is constantly threatened by rebel forces, February 1780–September 1781

14. The British face problems in supporting the Loyalist forces in Georgia; strategically weakened, the British are defeated by rebel forces in South Carolina, 1781



Sample content from volume 1, above:

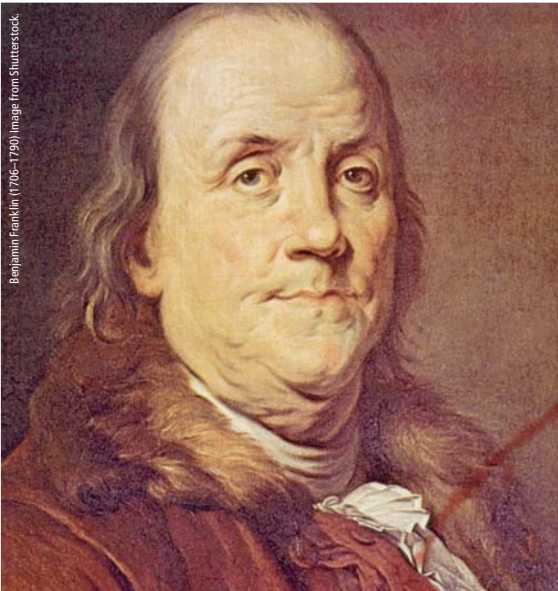
- A:** Declaration of Independence.
- B:** Letter from a British soldier describing how his life was saved when a large bunch of keys in his pocket deflected a bullet.
- C:** Letter from Benjamin Franklin saying that the British think a reduced tax on tea is enough to dampen American patriotism.



Map of Baltimore. Drawn by du Chesnoy for Lafayette. 1778. Image from Shutterstock.

Volume 2 follows the negotiations at Paris in 1782, culminating in the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which brought an end to the American Revolutionary War. Also shows the diplomatic process behind the key questions of independence and commercial relations.

1. Preliminary peace overtures through discussions over trade; petitions for restoration of South Carolina from October 1781
2. Appointments of diplomatic representatives both to serve in the mission in France to undertake detailed peace talks, and to serve in the Peace Commission in the United States to review outstanding issues at grass-roots level, December 1781–April 1782
3. Initial correspondence between American commissioners in Europe, British representatives, and the Foreign Secretary, emphasising the necessity to consider the positions of France, Spain and Holland in any peace negotiations, April–June 1782
4. Development of British policy towards the acceptance of the American demand for recognition of de facto independence as a prerequisite rather than a clause within the treaty; obstacles to negotiations presented by the French Court; revised powers for British negotiators, and for Benjamin Franklin, May–July 1782
5. Policy details begin to emerge and commercial agreements with Britain seem to be a major objective of all the countries; there are fresh fears that America may enter into a still closer association with France; reassurance of Britain's sincerity is required by the Americans, July–August 1782
6. Negotiations begin in earnest, but the resolution of independent status is paramount before all else can proceed; Government of Canada and the planned American treaty with Spain are discussed; technical means of concluding the treaty are reviewed at length, August 1782
7. The British agree to independence as the first article in a putative treaty and further agree to treaty terms, under Oswald's new commission, naming each of the 13 colonies. John Jay urges that the British redeploy their troops to recover Florida from the Spanish, but there is perhaps more concern that these forces may be used in the West Indies against the French, September – October 1782
8. Resolution of details including argument over compensation claims to Loyalists; a boundary map; and British troop withdrawal, November 1782
9. Final British amendments to the treaty and concessions agreed in order to bring the treaty to conclusion, November–December 1782



Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) Image from Shutterstock.



The Battle of Yorktown, General George Washington accepting the surrender of General Charles Cornwallis, 1781. Image from Shutterstock.

A *...wonderfully having kindly offered to
take a letter from me to your Lordship
& contain the Opportunity of offering the
Continuance of my ancient Respect for
your Talents and Virtues, and of con-
gratulating you on the returning good Dis-
position of your Country in favour of Ame-
rica which appears in the late Resolu-
tions of the Commons...*

B *I am I have the honour to be,
My Lord
Your Lordship's most obedient
& most humble Servant
B Franklin*

Sample content from volume 2, left:

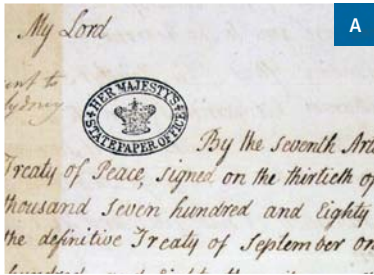
A&B: Letter, Benjamin Franklin, Passy, France, to Lord Shelburne, 22 March 1782, congratulating Shelburne on "the returning good Disposition of your Country in favour of America which appears in the late Resolutions of the Commons"; implying this will lead to a general peace, which Franklin hopes to see before he dies.

Official arrangements, reports and correspondence on continuing negotiations in Paris, before the Treaty of Paris is ratified in September 1783. Looks at post-treaty concerns such as trade and boundary disputes.

Period also sees the signing of the Constitution in 1788 and the election of Washington as President in 1791.



The Fugio Cent, 1787, designed by Benjamin Franklin. The first coin minted by the United States. Image from Shutterstock.



A

1. Call for a Royal Proclamation of cessation of arms by sea and land; consideration of arrangements for British withdrawal and the resumption of US imports; American desire for complete reciprocity of trade which they considered impossible as long as the British Navigation Acts continued in existence, January–August 1783

2. Concluding and ratifying the definitive treaty, August–September 1783

3. “Treaty of Paris”, peace treaty between Britain and the United States, finalised in 1783

4. Delays to the ratification procedure of the treaty following the initial exchange, October 1783–May 1784

5. Exchange of ratifications for the Definitive Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and the United States, May–August 1784

6. Post-treaty relations: issues arising from the absence of a separate commercial treaty, and the perceived strengthening of Franco-American relations, 1785

7. Intensification of trade- and boundary- related issues; incomplete withdrawal of British forces, and American non-repayment of debts, prevents recommencement of trade, new American trade arrangements are completed with France, 1786

8. The two main developing issues of the conflict over resolution of Loyalists’ claims on the British part; continuous appeals over American seamen impressed by the Royal Navy, 1787

9. Diplomatic uncertainties, partly caused by the new, restrictive, British trade regulations, and partly by the uncertainty of British relations with France, native American unrest on the borders; and

American discontent, within some states, with the Constitution, 1788

10. British monitoring of American anti-federalism, trade and British review of recent laws governing US foreign relations; complaints from Cherokee and Creek Indians about incursions into Indian territory, 1789

11. Trade issues and recompense claims dominate relations; review of US and British recent trade legislation is made; the difficulty of getting the British to agree to a strictly commercial treaty is discussed; the death of Benjamin Franklin is reported, 1790–1791

12. Impact of international relations, especially the US relationship with France, on British–American diplomacy; a movement towards greater Presidential authority within US federal government, March–December 1791



B

Sample content from volume 3, above:

A: Letter from John Adams complaining that British troops were not being withdrawn at the agreed rate following the signing of the peace treaty.

B: Signatures and seals of Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay from a 1782 amendment to the Treaty of Paris, which was finalised in 1783.

Volume 4 looks at Franco-American trade and its effect on relations with Britain, who were enforcing a naval blockade. Questions are raised about British involvement in Indian-American War as well as diplomatic debate concerning maritime law.

1. British wish to stay informed of US–Spanish treaty negotiations to maintain British advantage; continuing attempts at reparation of debts owed to British merchants as part of the treaty settlement, while outright opposition growing in America to fulfil these terms; consideration of the infractions against the 1783 treaty terms that Congress had recommended to individual states; outright rejection of Loyalist claims; British observations on the rift between US state and federal political ideals. British Government reply to accusations in the US press of British involvement in the Indian wars, January–March 1792
2. Effect of the Indian War on British–American relations; tensions arise from attempts to enforce terms of the 1783 treaty, such as boundary resolution; the United States is accused of non-fulfilment of several areas of the treaty, leading to a lengthy defence from Thomas Jefferson, US Secretary of State, including demanding that Britain review its own duties under the treaty, March–October 1792
3. The US rejects the idea of the British as mediators



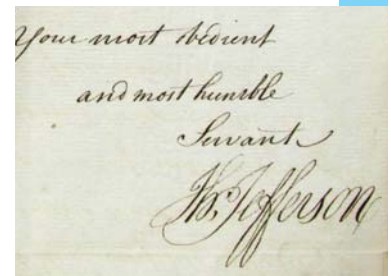
Early map of NE America, printed in England in 1795. Image from Shutterstock.

in the Indian Wars; the nature of Britain's treaty status with France and simultaneously the Franco-American alliance create a conflict, as Britain and France are on the brink of war, January–April 1793

4. French seizures of British vessels off American coasts and the French use of US ports provoke the British to question America's neutrality; propaganda activities of Citizen Genêt in North America, and general US sympathies for the French Directoire, increase the remonstrations and formal protests by the British Government, late April–August 1793

5. Britain adopts the new measure of a partial blockade against the United States to try to prevent the French using American ports; the actions permitted for a neutral country towards belligerents' shipping are much discussed, September–November 1793

6. The British Government's restrictions and controls of shipping between the United States and Europe, which categorised American shipments of goods to France as "contraband", impacts heavily on trade; the Americans argue that they have the right under international law to trade with belligerents. Modifications of the actions of both sides is not enough to prevent the British believing that US neutrality is breached, November 1793–June 1794



Sample content from volume 4, above:

Letter, Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 8 August 1793, to George Hammond, confirming US policy to deny asylum to all vessels [which had been] armed in US ports, with a list of vessels loading cargoes for France now in US ports.



John Jay (1745–1829), First Chief Justice of U.S. Supreme Court (1789–1795). Image from Shutterstock.



Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1794 resolves heightening diplomatic tensions, though the problem of British impressment of US sailors continues. Also looks at the worsening US-French relations.

1. John Jay, Envoy Extraordinary, arrives in London on a special mission to negotiate a new trade treaty with the British Government, May–June 1794
2. The issue of captured vessels and other international naval disagreements, including impressment, continue to occupy American officials; under these circumstances worsening Anglo-American relations make the British claims issue even harder to pursue, March–August 1794
3. British Government reactions to new American tactics regarding trade with belligerent powers; a review of general capture and condemnation of US vessels is under way, August 1794
4. British proposals for two projects: one for resolving all the points under dispute and another for the establishment of a commercial treaty; US proposed amendments, August–September 1794
5. Diplomatic displeasure arising from hostile language used in communications, and in public, in the US, September–October 1794
6. Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, “the



Early map of the Great Lakes, framed in Bordeaux, France, 1795. Image from Shutterstock.

“all matters in dispute between Great Britain and the United States have thus been amicably adjusted”

JOHN JAY

States failure to support US–France treaty obligations, May–December 1796

11. Impact of the political rift between France and US on British interests, British offer of mutual support against France; France proposes to alter its stance on neutral powers; First Nations’ disappointment as lands are placed under US jurisdiction; British access to trade on the Mississippi again under scrutiny, January–April 1797

12. British naval impressment issues and disputes return to the forefront; French attack British shipping; the British consider suspending negotiations with the US in the belief that France and US were on the brink of war, July 1797–January 1798

13. Worsening Franco-American relations and US fears that Britain is about to conclude peace with France; deterioration in relations leads to open hostilities between US and France; February–September 1798

14. Progress of the Boundary Commission, and review of policy to be implemented in case of the outbreak of war, November 1798–January 1799

15. Crisis in relations over fresh incident of Royal Navy impressment of American sailors; consideration of US policy in relation to France; and slow progress in resolving British claims and boundary issues, January–June 1799

16. Breach in relations between US and British Claims Commissioners, the US Commissioners disagreeing with both the procedure of the Board of Claims and the decisions taken thus far; questions over future of the Commission, July–December 1799

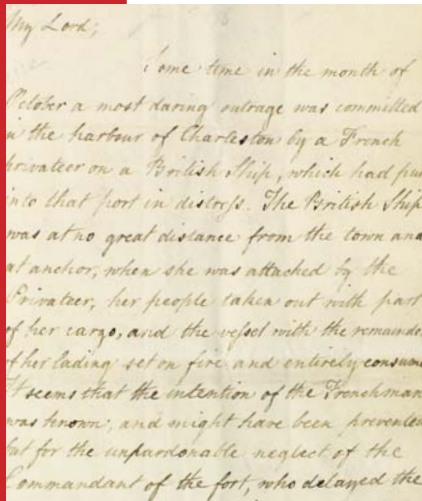
Jay Treaty”, signed 19 November 1794, the hope being that “all matters in dispute between Great Britain and the United States have thus been amicably adjusted”; the next stage will be the formation of a boundary commission and the resolution of claims. British report of the problems caused by “improper” publication by US Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph, of British diplomatic correspondence, November–December 1794

7. Debate over the new treaty, and immediate problems presented by its implementation, 1795; growing tensions over the continuing impressment of American sailors by the Royal Navy, and further, over US perceptions that certain aspects of American sovereignty have been infringed and American laws violated, February–July 1795

8. American ratification of the Anglo-American Treaty of 1794; objections to the treaty and new negotiations are already being considered, especially concerning the rights of trade with belligerent powers; frontier negotiations require settlement as the deadline for evacuation of US posts by the British forces approaches, August 1795–March 1796

9. Threat of rejection of the 1794 treaty by the United States administration, March–April 1796

10. Appointment of a new British Minister to the US; obstacles to implementation of treaty terms; French complaints against English actions during the current war, and against United



Sample content from volume 5, above:

Despatch, Edward Thornton to Lord Grenville, 1 December 1797, reporting an attack on a British vessel by the French in Charlestown Harbour.

AMERICA AND GREAT BRITAIN Diplomatic Relations

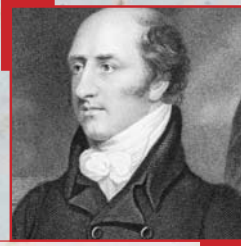
1775–1815

BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

MAJOR EVENTS AND HISTORICAL FIGURES

David Hartley the Younger (1732–1813)

Signatory to the Treaty of Paris. Was also the first MP to put the case for abolition of the slave trade before the House of Commons.



George Canning (1770 – 1827)

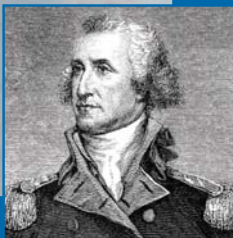
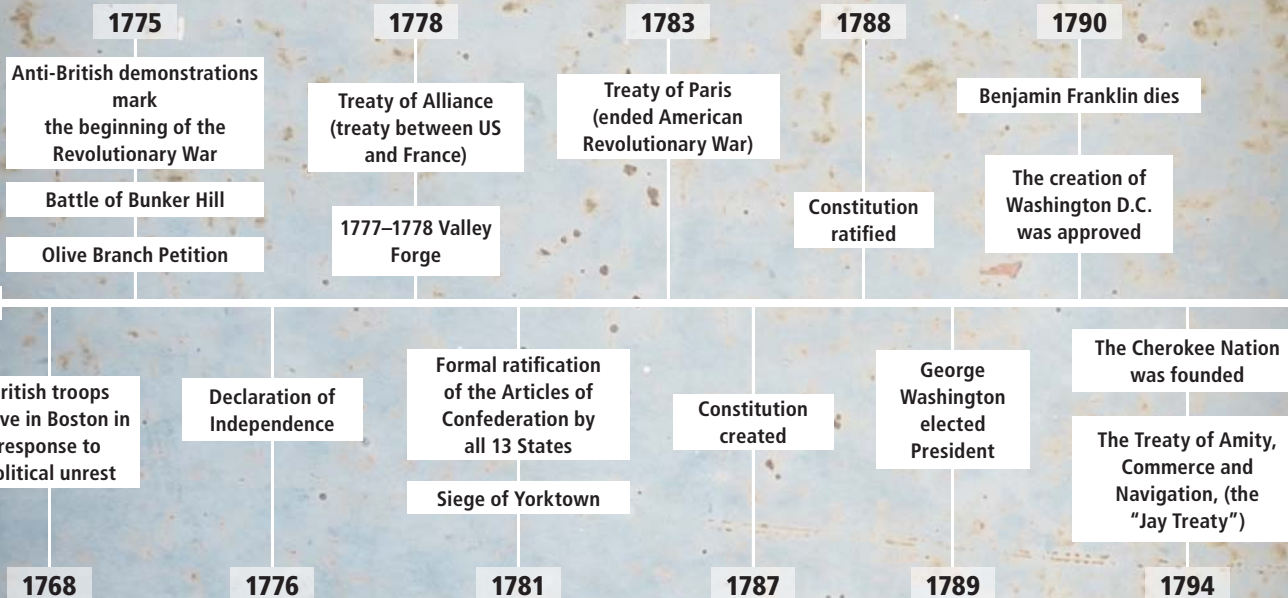
British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from November 1795, resigning his position at the Foreign Office in April 1799.

Marquis of Carmarthen, Francis Godolphin Osborne (1751 – 1799)

Served as Foreign Secretary under William Pitt the Younger from 1783 to 1791.

Richard Oswald (1705–1784)

British Peace Commissioner in Paris in 1782, who helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris.



George Washington (1731–1799)

Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, one of the Founding Fathers, and the first President of the United States (1789–97).

Henry Laurens (1723–1792)

Delegate to the Continental Congress from January 1777 until 1780. Sent to Paris in 1783 as one of the Peace Commissioners for the negotiations which resulted in the Treaty of Paris.

Benjamin Franklin (1705–1790)

Founding Father and renowned author, politician, scientist, inventor, statesman, and diplomat.



Lord George Germain
(1716 – 1785)

British soldier and politician who served as British secretary of state for America during the American War of Independence.



Lord Grenville, William Wyndham Grenville, 1st Baron Grenville
(1759 – 1834)

Home Secretary from June 1789–June 1791, before becoming Prime Minister from February 1806–March 1807.



King George III
(1738–1820)

King of Great Britain and Ireland from 1760 until his death in 1820, overseeing the union of the two countries on 1 January 1801, after which he became King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

1797

John Adams elected President

1801

Thomas Jefferson elected President

1806

The "Continental system" imposed by France

1809

James Madison elected President

1814

Battle of Fort Mchenry (event which Star Spangled Banner was based on)

Treaty of Ghent

1798–1800 US "Quasi War" with France

1798

Louisiana Purchase

1803

The Embargo Act

The Chesapeake-Leopard Affair

1807

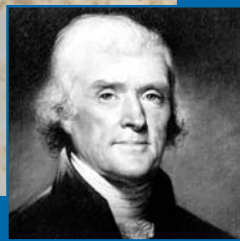
1812–1814 War of 1812

1812

Senate ratifies Treaty of Ghent

End of Napoleonic Wars in Europe

1815

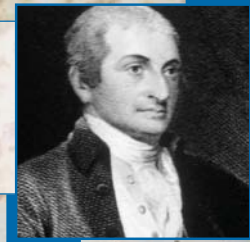


Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

American politician and Founding Father who held a number of influential government positions including Secretary of State 1790–1793, Vice-President 1797–1801, US Minister to France 1785–1789, and President from 1801–1809.

John Jay (1745–1829)

American statesman, diplomat, signer of the Treaty of Paris, and first Chief Justice of the United States (1789–95).



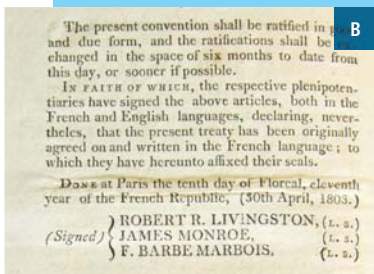
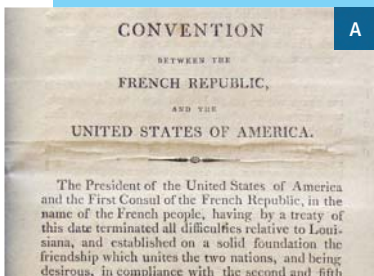
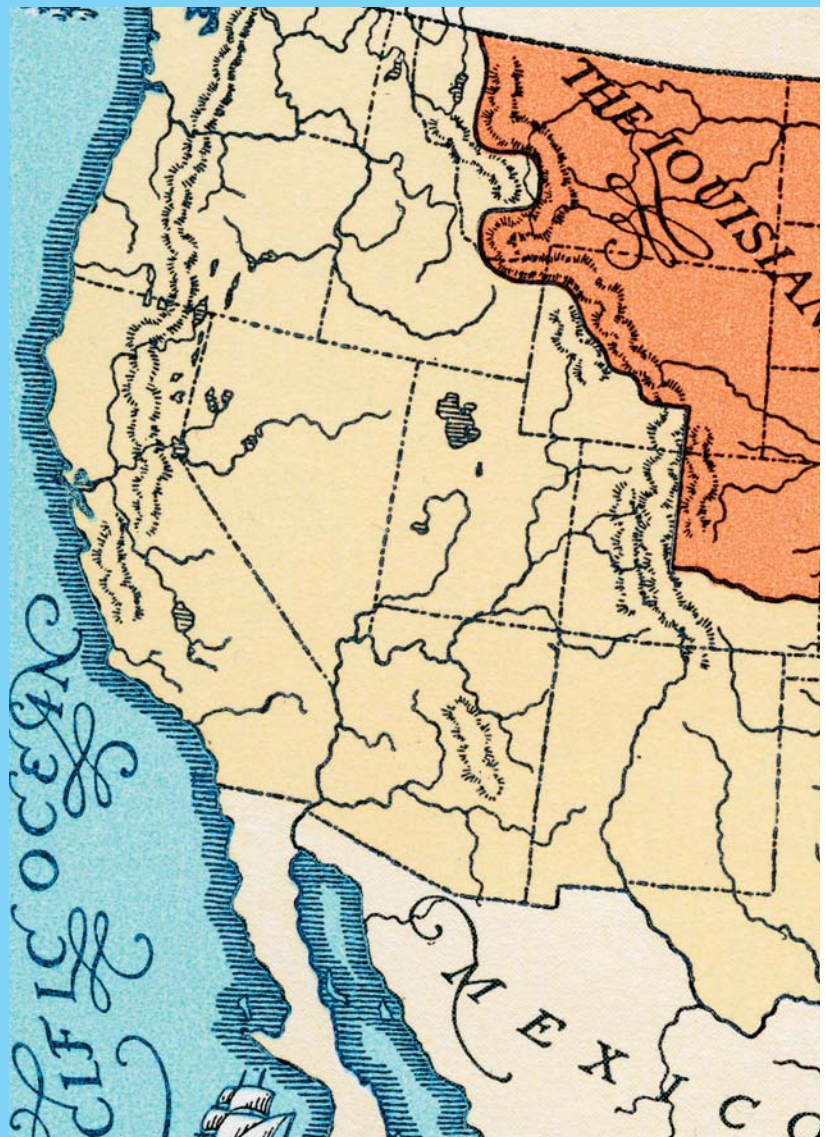
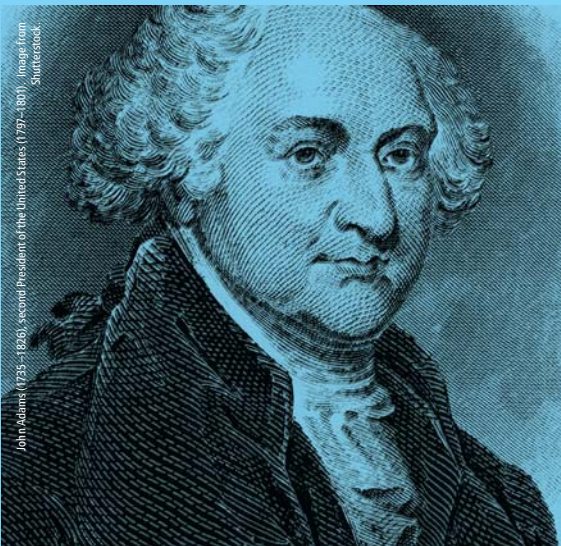
Thomas Pinckney (1750–1828)

US Minister to Great Britain August 1792 – July 1796.



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

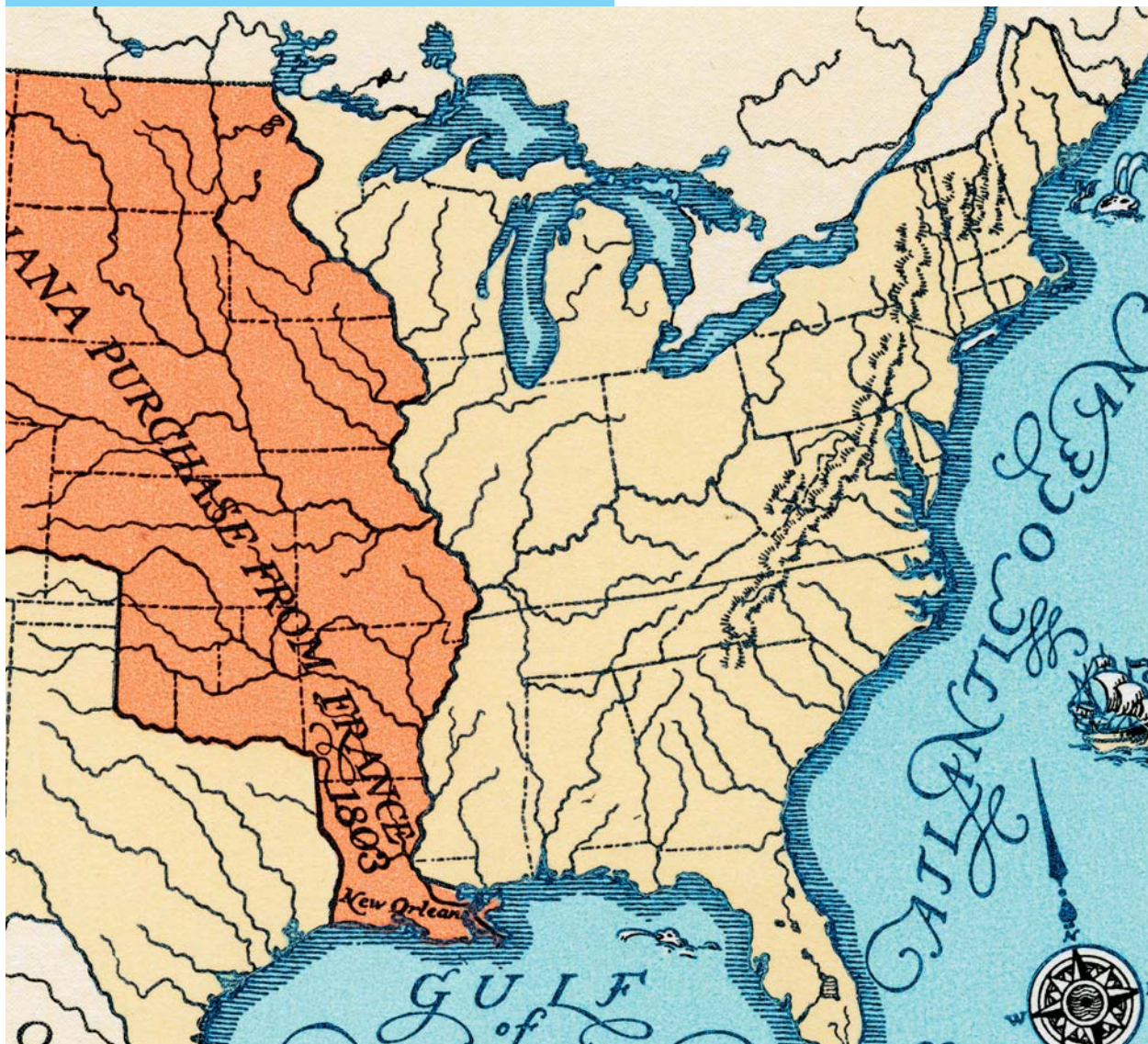
Start of the Napoleonic war has diplomatic implications on Anglo-US and Franco-US relations. The period covered also witnesses the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, which saw the near doubling of American owned territory.



1. Crisis in diplomatic negotiations over recovery of losses promised in the Treaty of 1794: President John Adams now finds the Loyalist claims to be extinguished; Rufus King proposes alternative means of repaying creditors, though he suggests a new treaty is needed; the British pledge to maintain the status of the claims but agree to the replacement of the Commissioners on the Board of Claims, January–April 1800
2. British Act of Parliament to relax trade regulations for neutral shipping; British internal review of claims procedures, May–December 1800
3. Impact on British policies and relations arising from the Franco-American treaty in reference to which France demanded greater restrictions on American trade, and also the effect of Thomas Jefferson’s election as President; increasingly negative public reaction to the British blockade of US trade to the West Indies, December 1800–May 1801
4. Blockade measures and other shipping and trade restrictions mark increasingly tense relations, as

there is still no prospect of agreement on the new treaty articles, May–December 1800

5. New Convention modifying the Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1794 agreed between Great Britain and United States; impending decision on cession of Louisiana from Spain to France causes anxiety, January–February 1802
6. United States preoccupied with relations with France and Spain and with the ramifications of the future of Louisiana and the Floridas. However, Rufus King urges resolution with Britain of three treaty areas of concern to the US: Maryland bank stock, boundaries and US trade with British colonies, January–April 1803
7. Immediate concerns for Anglo-American relations following the renewal of British–French hostilities; further issues arising from the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, May 1803



Map showing the area covered by the Louisiana Purchase, 1803. Getty Images.

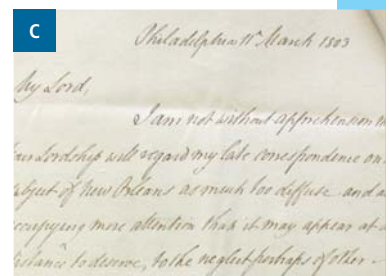
8. Finalisation of the cession of Louisiana from France to the US, details of the transfer from Spain to France to the US scrutinised by the British; new British concerns for trade and shipping as a result, May–October 1803

9. The outbreak of war in Europe leads to an eclipse of President Jefferson's pro-France policy; US demands resurface for a justification of the British practice of impressment, November 1803–January 1804

10. Two US bills proposed to protect against British impressment; rumours that the US is considering excluding Britain from access to the Mississippi; rumours of a split between the Eastern States and the Union over

ratification of anti-British legislation, January–May 1804

11. Alterations to diplomatic relations and status between Great Britain and the US in view of the expiry of the 1794 treaty: US Secretary of State James Monroe unofficially assures Lord Harrowby that the treaty will be extended to 1807, but there is no action on it. The anti-impressment bills have not been ratified by the US but neither has the convention agreed between Rufus King and Lord Hawkesbury. US anger over impressment grows and James Monroe is heavily critical of the British system of colonial trade, August–December 1805

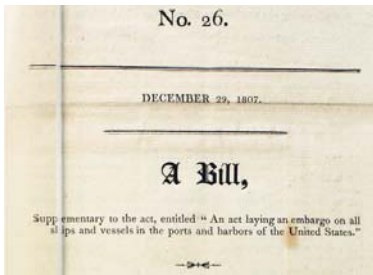


Sample content from volume 6, left and above:

A: Convention on the Louisiana Purchase agreement.

B: Printed extract from the Louisiana Purchase.

C: Letter from British diplomat complaining he was being treated like an ordinary American citizen.



Sample content from volume 7, above:

“An act laying an embargo on all ships and vessels in the ports and harbours of the United States”

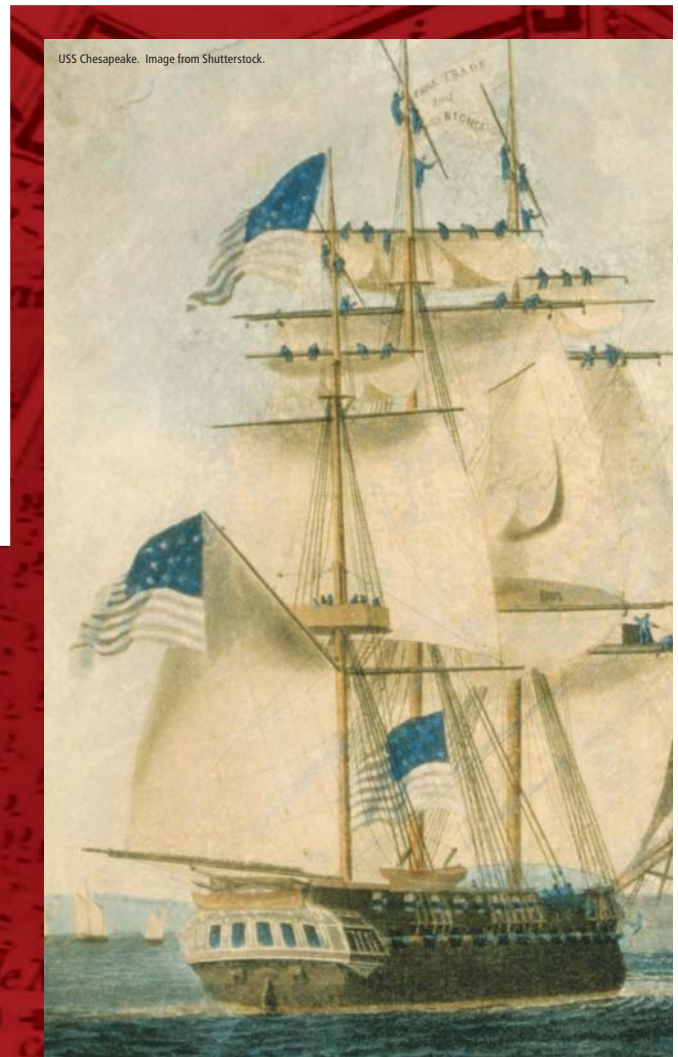
Period dominated by diplomatic tension over naval issues, most notably the Chesapeake affair, and worsening relations as a US embargo on British trade is enacted. The US government considers retaliation against British ‘aggression’ on US coasts and waters.

1. The US Government considers retaliation against perceived British aggression on the US coasts and ports; existence of a state of near-war, January–December 1806
2. Following several years of negotiations, a new treaty agreed between the United States Commissioners and His Majesty’s Government, December 1806
3. Expectations of the resumption of cordial relations on resolving issues through the new treaty, January–June 1807
4. Incident of stop and search by a Royal Navy crew of a US vessel causes much outrage: the “Chesapeake Affair” must be resolved before there can be any further negotiations, and ultimately leads to the rejection of the 1806 treaty, July–October 1807
5. Separate negotiations now required to resolve issues arising from the Chesapeake affair, in particular the British Government’s right of stop and search for deserters, before general issues could be addressed. A special envoy, George Rose, was sent to negotiate specifically on terms for settlement of the Chesapeake incident, October–December 1807
6. Worsening British–American relations as a US embargo on British trade is enacted, British popularity at an all-time low. George Rose, Special

Envoy to the US, views the embargo of British goods as largely ineffective; a proposal is made that the US should simultaneously sign the recall of the proclamation of 2 July 1807 while the British should sign the reparations agreement, but ultimately negotiations fail in large part due to British insistence that US first repeal the embargo, December 1807–March 1808

7. The American Government continues to dispute the right of the British Government to issue and enforce blockade orders which would affect their trade as neutrals; practical matters such as clearing up claims makes small progress, March–December 1808

8. A further souring of diplomatic relations follows British Foreign Secretary George Canning’s fury with the US Minister to Britain, William Pinckney, over his public references to personal conversations,



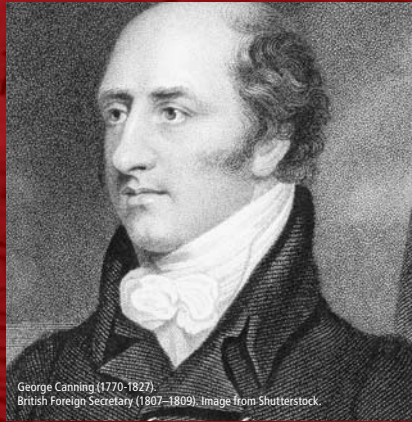
USS Chesapeake. Image from Shutterstock.

“Details of the Affair of the Chesapeake... would be likely to bring on a complicated and fruitless Controversy”

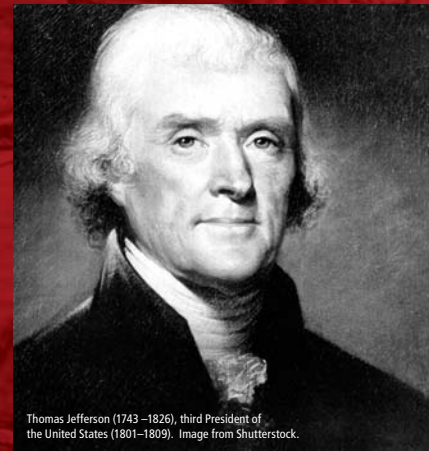
DAVID ERSKINE

cited in accounts published in the US press, implying that the American Minister was controlling negotiations, September–December 1808

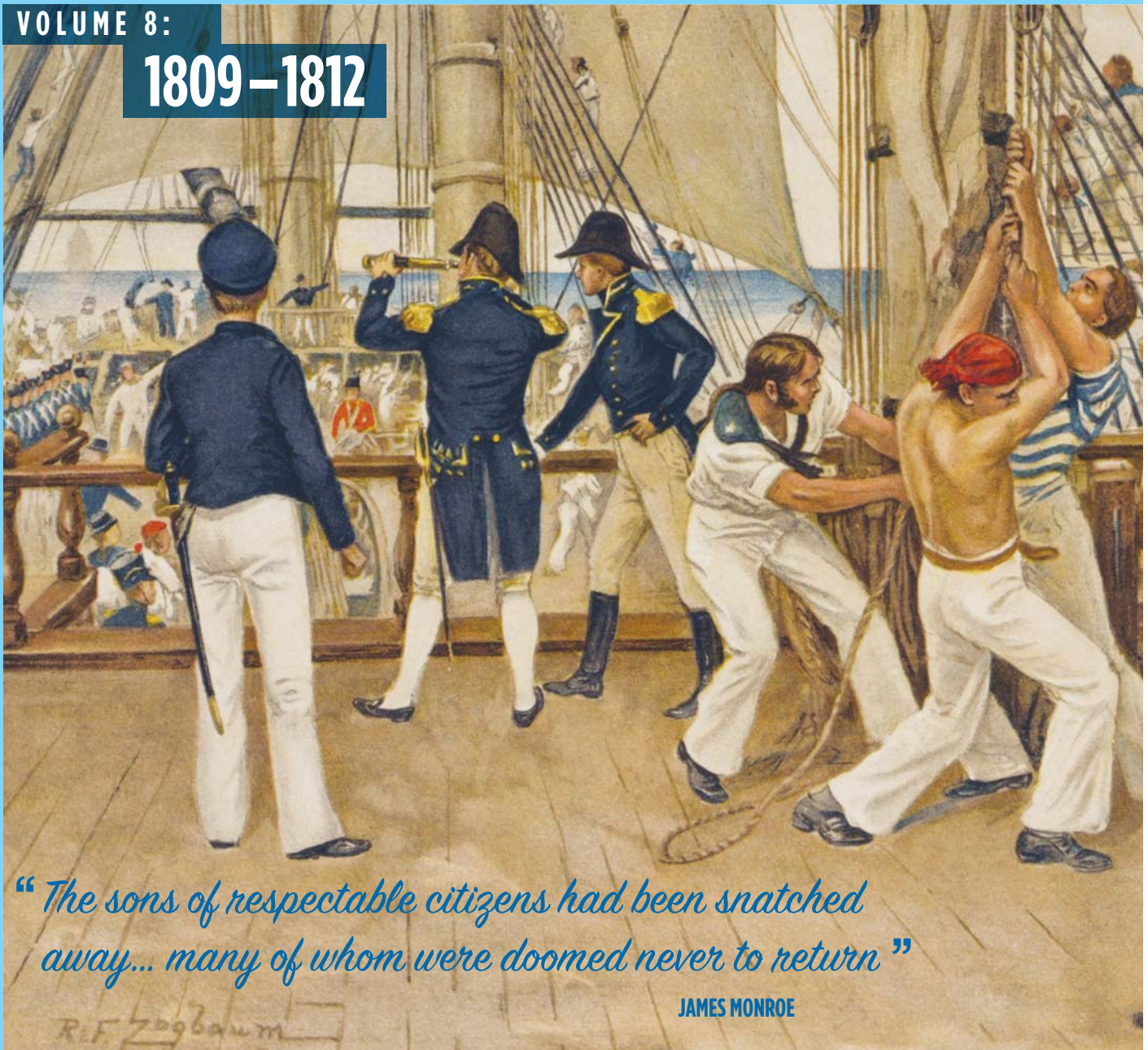
9. In response to the altered situation in Europe, some modification of the British position towards the US via Orders-in-Council is proposed. However, despite the British conceding that the ban on French vessels using American harbours suggests some indication of impartiality, the two sides are too far divided and the US administration redoubles its efforts to prevent British use of her ports and harbours, December 1808–January 1809



George Canning (1770–1827), British Foreign Secretary (1807–1809). Image from Shutterstock.

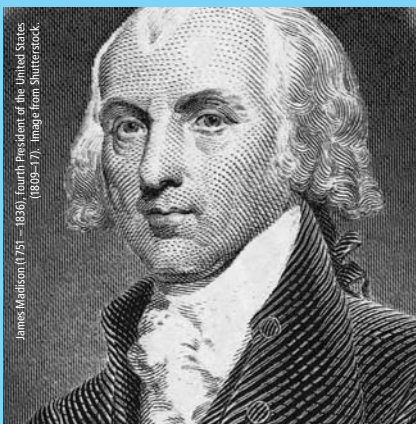


Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), third President of the United States (1801–1809). Image from Shutterstock.



“The sons of respectable citizens had been snatched away... many of whom were doomed never to return”

JAMES MONROE



James Madison (1751–1836), fourth President of the United States (1809–17). Image from Shutterstock.

Volume 8 focuses on diplomatic negotiations concerning trade, neutrality, blockades, and Anglo-French competition. British diplomat oversteps his mandate resulting in protracted talks about diplomatic practice.

1. The new American administration put up a bill interdicting trade with Great Britain, France and their dependencies; however, David Erskine and Robert Smith, the new US Secretary of State, move forward on negotiations. This apparent breakthrough arises from Erskine unintentionally overstepping his mandate in promising that the Orders-in-Council at issue would be withdrawn, January–May 1809

2. Appointment of Francis James Jackson as the new British Minister Plenipotentiary to the US, on the recall of Mr D Erskine; fresh negotiating instructions are supplied and George Canning, Foreign Secretary, begins distancing the British Government from the agreed terms, with a view to disclaiming the arrangement, June–December 1809

3. Diplomatic impasse: the British position that the US should have understood that Erskine was exceeding his brief, the US position that the British should not offer a concession and then withdraw it; further diplomatic discussion of the imposition and administration of the British embargo on US trade with Europe, November 1809–June 1810

4. Fresh instructions for the new British representative to the United States, but his position is restricted; possible continuation of

American sailors and officers on deck of USS Constitution during engagement with the HMS Guerriere off the coast of Nova Scotia, August 19 1812. Image from Shutterstock.



negotiations in London via Pinckney; US complaint of the lack of progress of a British response to a possible withdrawal of the Berlin and Milan decrees; the US are pressing that the May 1806 Orders-in-Council should be repealed otherwise Congress would put into force the Non-Intercourse Act, June–November 1810

5. Upon the repeal by France of the Berlin and Milan decrees America demands that the British Government must revoke its Orders-in-

Council; Britain resists, requiring more proof that France has unconditionally repealed the decrees. Complications with regard to US plans for West Florida arise from Britain's alliance with Spain, December 1810

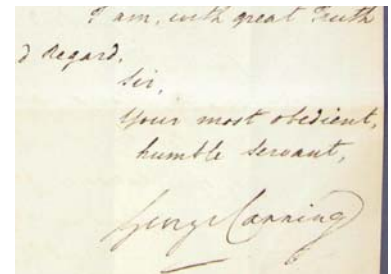
6. Official US complaints about the conduct of Francis Jackson's mission to the US; development of a stalemate over the issue of revoking the British blockade; the British make some concessions, such as the appointment of an Ambassador to the United States, January–March 1811

7. The instructions to the new British diplomatic appointment to the US: to resolve the Chesapeake incident, therefore to repeat the disavowal but show willing to make good, returning men taken and providing compensation; however, despite an audience with the Prince Regent, William Pinckney leaves London for America, April–May 1811

8. The British Government consolidates its position over the right to enforce blockades, following the exercise of rights to respond to French actions, regardless of their effect on neutrals; the US suspends trade with Britain until it ceases to violate the neutral commerce of the US, May–December 1811

9. Continuous efforts by Great Britain to have the US remove the ban on British trade, equally the US urge the British Government to rescind the Order-in-Council constituting a blockade against America; report, by the British Minister to the US, of a vote planned in the US Congress on the declaration of war. January–February 1812

10. The British Minister to the US is increasingly isolated as anti-British feeling continues to increase over the apparent intransigence of the British Government, still insistent that proof is required to show that France has revoked the decrees of Milan and Berlin. Without a further concession from the British, Congress will vote on whether to proceed to hostilities. March 1812



Sample content from volume 8, above:

Despatch, George Canning, Foreign Secretary, to David Erskine, British Minister to the US, 22 May 1809, a most severe and major reprimand for Erskine's departure from his instructions in the negotiations over the Chesapeake affair.



Done in triplicate at Ghent, the twenty-fourth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen.

(L.S.)	GAMBIEL,
(L.S.)	H. GOULBURN,
(L.S.)	WM. ADAMS,
(L.S.)	JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,
(L.S.)	J. A. BAYARD,
(L.S.)	H. CLAY,
(L.S.)	JON. RUSSELL,
(L.S.)	ALBERT GALLATIN.

Convention between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America.—Signed at London, October 20, 1814.

(Ratifications exchanged January 28, 1815.)

HIS Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United States of America, desiring to cement the good understanding which happily subsists between them, have, for that purpose, named their respective Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King has appointed the Right Honourable, Frederick...

Sample content from
Volume 9, above:

Articles from the
Treaty of Ghent, 1814.

The outbreak of the War of 1812 was the culmination of several long-standing and unresolved issues between the two countries. The volume focuses on the diplomatic process behind the bringing of peace in the form of the Treaty of Ghent which was ratified in 1815.

1. The British Minister to the US reports that the US Congress wavers between war with France and war with Great Britain; the US considers its own blockade and the British discover intelligence that suggests the French have not revoked the decrees of Berlin and Milan; diplomatic attitudes harden: the British expect the US to join with them and move against France while the US distrusts the British interpretation of events, April 1812
2. The US refer to an authentic copy of a French instrument revoking the decrees of

Berlin and Milan, to which the British react tentatively and not with negotiations, May–June 1812

3. The US declares war on Great Britain, with effect from 18 June 1812; delays in informing the British Government mean that Britain is still working on diplomatic solutions, and having at last seen a copy of the French revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees revoke their own Orders-in-Council and offer a full enquiry on impressment cases, late July 1812

4. Initially Great Britain planned for a speedy resolution of the crisis and provisional offers are made by the US to suspend hostilities, but ultimately the terms were rejected by the British, largely over mutual disagreement regarding impressment, August–October 1812

5. Officially a state of war exists between Great Britain and the US, October 1812

6. A US “olive branch” initiative offered; diplomatic



The Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815. Image from Shutterstock.



Political cartoon from 1813 depicting James Madison winning a boxing match with King George III. Image from Library of Congress.

technicalities arise over empowerment of officials to negotiate peace terms, November 1812

7. Agreement over treatment of prisoners of war is reached between Great Britain and the US, November 1812; the French announce revocation of their decrees with certain conditions pertaining to US and Great Britain, December 1812

8. Official British declaration of hostilities against the United States; a diplomatic incident arises over the exit from the US of the British Chargé d'Affaires, January–March 1813

9. Proposed Russian mediation rejected but Lord Castlereagh suggests, and Secretary Monroe accepts, direct mediation between the two countries at Gottenburg; petitions from traders in Canada particularly regarding border issues, March 1813–May 1814

10. Peace overtures: Ghent is chosen as location; negotiations ensue over borders, impressment, peace terms extending to Indian territories, resolution over the blockade, and fisheries rights, and result in the Treaty of Ghent, 24 December 1814

11. Aftermath: Diplomatic appointments, the implementation of the treaty, and issues arising from interpretation of clauses, December 1814–March 1815

12. Official cessation of hostilities

– procedures completed over March–August 1815; much discussion over the status of ex-slaves, prisoners of war, and Indian territories, March–July 1815

13. Negotiations in London lead to a separate Anglo-American commercial convention, May–July 1815

14. Restoration of normal diplomatic relations, August 1815

15. Creation of the Commission, appointed under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent, to resolve boundary issues, 1816



Seal of the US Army, referencing its creation during the wars of independence. Image from Shutterstock.



PRICING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

America and Great Britain: Diplomatic Relations, 1775–1815, is available to institutions and individuals via a one-time fee for perpetual access. Consortia and multi-site agreements are also available.

For a proposal or further information, please get in touch with your usual Cambridge or East View representative or contact us using one of the following email addresses:

In the Americas
online@cambridge.org
info@eastview.com

Rest of the World
library.sales@cambridge.org
info@eastview.com

9 Volumes
ISBN 978-1-139-97639-8

cambridge.org/cae
www.eastview.com/cae

ABOUT CAMBRIDGE ARCHIVE EDITIONS

Cambridge Archive Editions is a globally respected publisher of primary source material, compiled through painstaking original research in government records and other sources. Our aim is to make available to libraries and scholars historical reference materials which otherwise would remain unknown, difficult to access, or fragmentary.

THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

With content published over 25 years. The full collection includes over 1,000 volumes with 130 titles comprised of nearly 700,000 pages of primary sources.

Subject collections include:

- America and Great Britain: Diplomatic Relations, 1775–1815: 9 volumes
- East and South-East Asia: 8 titles, 88 volumes
- European, Slavic and Caucasian: 10 titles, 38 volumes
- Near and Middle East: 110 titles, 900 volumes

Cambridge Archive Editions titles are available to institutions and individuals and access can be purchased in their entirety as well as in individual sets.

Throughout Cambridge Archive Editions, the contents are listed alongside the originals they are describing. In addition, MARC records are available for all volumes.

America and Great Britain: Diplomatic Relations 1775–1815, British Government Documents, was researched and edited by A.L.P. Burdett. She has also authored more than 40 important collections of government documents with Cambridge Archive Editions, focusing on the Middle East and Balkan regions.



A barefoot Congress soldier with his musket c. 1775. Many of the American soldiers in the 1770s lacked basic equipment and supplies. Image from Shutterstock.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles and organizing its Powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and positive effect, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inseparable to them, and inseparable to its exercise only. — He has called together legislative Bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the People. — He has refused for a long time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise, the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of Invasion from without, and convulsions within. — He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Law for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their Offices, and the amount and Payment of their Salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance. — He has kept among us, in times of Peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power. — He has endeavoured to bring us to the point of a complete Separation from our Mother Country, by declaring our Trade to be illegal, and by taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments. — He has suspended our own Legislatures, and declared themselves invested with powers to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the lives of our People. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to combat the Wrecks of Death, Desolation and Tyranny, already begun, with circumstances of Cruelty & Opprobrium scarcely parallelled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation. — He has endeavoured to bring our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Mercenaries of their Hated Brethren, to sell themselves by their Swords. — He has excited domestic Injuries amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Age, Sex and Condition. In every Stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from time to time of the Attempts of their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Migration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Amity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of Right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and other signatories of the Declaration of Independence, with their names written in cursive script.

The US Declaration of Independence, 1776. Image from Shutterstock.



cambridge.org/cae www.eastview.com/cae



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS