



Trouble in the New Nation:

What challenges did Washington face during his presidency?

Washington faced difficult challenges while in office. Britain and France were pushing the U.S. to get more involved in their conflicts. President Washington stood firm against this pressure. Native Americans, aided by the British and the Spanish, fought against the American settlers moving westward. In addition, there was a growing unrest from the American people, as well.

Directions: At each station you will find materials to help you answer the questions below. You may need to answer them out of order as you rotate throughout the room.

Station #1- The Whiskey Rebellion

1. Who did the whiskey tax *help*? Who did it *hurt*?

2. How did George Washington respond to the Whiskey Rebellion? *Use the primary source at your station to provide a specific quote and then explain what it means.*

3. Why was Washington's response significant?

Station #2- Trouble in Europe Affects the U.S.

1. Why didn't Washington want to be drawn into European conflicts?

2. Define the Neutrality Proclamation: _____

3. How did European nations attempt to involve America in their conflict even after the Neutrality Proclamation? Give examples.

4. What was Jay's Treaty? Give specific details.

Station #3- Trouble in the West

1. Why were Native Americans in the west unhappy? _____

2. What was the Treaty of Greenville? Who did it primarily benefit?

3. Why did Washington think it was important to fix our relationship with Spain?

4. Examine the map and explain how the U.S. benefited from Pinckney's Treaty.

Station #4: Washington Leaves Office

1. What are some precedents that Washington established as the first president?

2. What was Washington's feeling about foreign policy for America? Why was it complicated?

3. Why was Washington concerned about the development of political parties in the U.S.?

Station #1: The Whiskey Rebellion

Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, proposed a tax on whiskey in order to raise revenue (funds) for the new nation. Collecting a tax on some products would help the nation pay off the war debt. In 1791, Congress passed a tax on the manufacture and sale of whiskey, a type of alcohol made from grain. Western Pennsylvania farmers along the frontier were especially upset by this tax, as it was their main source of profit. Their anger turned into violence in July of 1794. An armed mob attacked tax collectors and burned down buildings. This protest, called the **Whiskey Rebellion**, alarmed government leaders. They viewed it as a challenge to the power of the new government. Washington sent about 15,000 federal troops to put down the rebellion. The troops marched over the mountains and scattered the rebels without a fight or a single life lost. Many people were arrested, and later pardoned or found not guilty.

The Whiskey Rebellion was the first real test of strength for the new government. Washington's action sent a strong message to the public: the government would use force if necessary to maintain order, and would enforce federal laws.

Primary Source Analysis

“When [groups have formed] to defeat the [enforcement] of the laws laying taxes upon spirits distilled within the United States... it is in my judgment necessary... for calling forth the militia in order to suppress the [revolt]... and to cause the laws to be duly [enforced].

Therefore...I, George Washington, President of the United States, do hereby command all persons being insurgents... to disperse and retire peaceably.

And I do moreover warn all persons whomsoever against aiding... or comforting the [offenders] of the aforesaid treasonable (rebellious) acts; and do require all officers and other citizens, according to their respective duties and the laws of the land, to prevent and suppress such dangerous proceedings. . . .

G. WASHINGTON

Station #2- Trouble in Europe Affects the U.S.

On July 14, 1789, The French people revolted against their government and the French Revolution began. Thomas Jefferson, Minister to France at the time, rejoiced that the French would have liberty. A few months later, France also declared war on England. Some Americans supported England, while others sided with France. Divided opinions in Congress and among the people threatened U.S. involvement in foreign wars. George Washington considered this a danger to our brand new nation. We were not prepared for another conflict, with war debt, a small navy and our own problems to work out. On April 22, 1793, he issued the **Neutrality Proclamation**. It stated that the United States would not take sides in a war with Europe, and threatened arrest against any American given assistance to any country at war.

Staying neutral proved to be difficult. The French tried to draw Americans into the conflict by sending an ambassador to the U.S. to urge Americans to choose a side. Britain, too, tried to get America involved in this European conflict. Britain was unhappy that the U.S. traded with the French West Indies, so they began capturing neutral American ships. This policy of **impressment** forced American merchants into the British navy, and outraged Americans.

Washington sent **John Jay**, Chief Justice of the United States, to discuss a solution with the British. The negotiation became known as **Jay's Treaty**. America agreed to pay British businessmen debts that were owed to them from before the Revolution, and Britain agreed to allow small American trading ships into the West Indies. Trading war materials was banned. Britain also agreed to remove troops still in the western frontier of the U.S. Very few Americans approved of this treaty, including Washington, but it was ultimately approved by the Senate after a heated debate.

Primary Source Analysis

“...that they [the United States] should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial toward the belligerent Powers.”

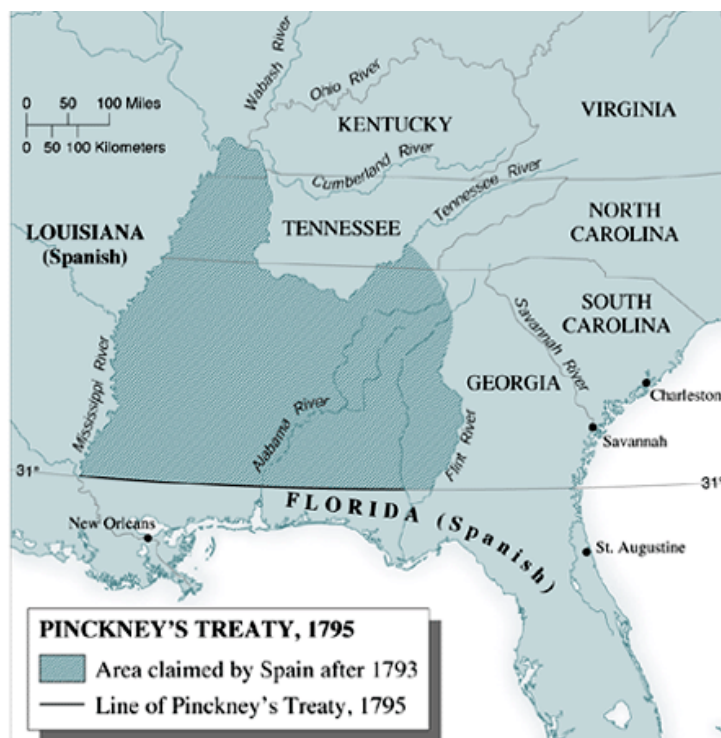
Station #3- Trouble in the West

The British and Spanish were trying to stir up Native American anger against American settlers west of the Appalachian Mountains. Washington signed treaties with these groups to protect their land, but American settlers ignored the treaties and moved onto lands promised to Native Americans. Fighting often broke out between the two groups. Washington decided to use force to put down the fighting. He sent the army to restore order in the Northwest Territory. In November of 1791, he met a strong Native American force that resulted in more than 600 U.S. soldiers dead. It was the worst defeat U.S. forces had ever suffered against Native Americans.

Americans hoped that an alliance with France would help them achieve full control of the west. However, this idea worried the British. In 1794, the British encouraged Native Americans to destroy American settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains. They also began building a new fort in Ohio. Washington sent a Revolutionary War general to the area to restore peace. After several violent conflicts with the Natives in the area, **The Treaty of Greenville** was reached in 1795. Native American leaders agreed to surrender most of the land in what is now Ohio.

At the same time, Washington kept his sights on another goal. One of the most important goals Washington had while president was to establish a friendship between the United States and Spain, since Spain had colonies in North America. The relationship had been tense since 1784, when Spain closed the port of New Orleans to Americans, cutting off access to the southern end of the Mississippi River. By closing the port, Spain prevented Americans from transporting goods to the East, and to the rest of the world.

U.S. Ambassador to Spain, Thomas Pinckney, was sent to Spain in 1785 to negotiate a treaty that became known as **Pinckney's Treaty**. It was successful for two reasons: first, the boundaries between the U.S. and Spanish colonies around Florida were defined, and secondly, Spain agreed to give the U.S. rights to use the port of New Orleans without paying any fees. The main reason that Spain agreed to these terms was largely out of fear- they worried that America was developing a better relationship with Britain. In order to keep Britain and America from working together against Spain, Spain needed to develop a good relationship with America, too.



Station #4- Washington Leaves Office

The first president of the United States ended his second term in March 1797. After eight years in office, he decided not to seek a third term. This became another precedent- a first- that future presidents would continue to follow until 1941. During his time in office, Washington had organized a national government. He had signed treaties with Britain and Spain that allowed for development of the frontier. The president also guided the admission of three new states- Vermont, Kentucky and Tennessee.

When he left office, Washington delivered what became known as a Farewell Address- a speech on the completion of his term as president and the state of the nation. This, too, became a precedent that future leaders would follow. In his Farewell Address, Washington advised the nation to avoid permanent alliances with foreign countries. He warned against **sectionalism**, an interest in the welfare of only one section of the country rather than the nation as a whole. He believed this would divide and harm the U.S. He also said that political unity was the only way to preserve a successful, united nation. He warned Americans to resist the desire to form political parties, as they would cause a divide in the young nation. Some of this advice would help to shape the policies of America for more than 100 years.

Primary Source Analysis

“It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world... observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible.”

- Washington's Farewell Address, 1797