



Documentary Timeline: American Diplomacy Before the Monroe Doctrine <http://edsitement.neh.gov>

Key to EDSITEment Resources:

- A** = [Avalon Project](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm) [http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm]
D = [Digital History](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/) [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/]
F = [Foreign Relations of the United States](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/) [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/], a link from [Internet Public Library](http://www.ipl.org/) [http://www.ipl.org/]
J = [James Monroe: Life Before the Presidency](http://www.americanpresident.org/history/jamesmonroe/biography/LifeBeforePresidency.common.shtml) [http://www.americanpresident.org/history/jamesmonroe/biography/LifeBeforePresidency.common.shtml] on The American President [http://www.americanpresident.org/]
L = [Library of Congress](http://www.loc.gov/) [http://www.loc.gov/], a link from [American Memory](http://memory.loc.gov/) [http://memory.loc.gov/]
M = [American Studies at the University of Virginia](http://xroads.virginia.edu/) [http://xroads.virginia.edu/]

- 1782, Nov. 30: Preliminary Articles of Peace (between the United States and Britain)
The king of England recognizes the United States. A U.S. border is defined.
Document: [Preliminary Articles of Peace](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/prel1782.htm)
[http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/prel1782.htm] (A)
- 1783, April 15: Articles of Peace ratified by Congress.
- 1784: Spain closes the Mississippi River to American shipping.
- 1785, July 20: Jay-Gardoqui negotiations center on Spain's disagreement with U.S. border provisions in the Articles of Peace as well as Spain's closure of the Mississippi. John Jay, as authorized by Congress, meets with Spanish minister, Don Diego de Gardoqui, but without resolution.
- 1789, July 14: Bastille Day
The French Revolution begins. At first, many Americans are sympathetic to the French Revolution, especially those who aligned themselves with Jefferson and Madison.
- 1789 April: George Washington becomes president.
- 1792, Sept. 21: French Republic proclaimed. American sympathy toward France begins to weaken.

- 1793-1794: *Brief Secondary Account: [Years of Crisis](#)*
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=8]
“In 1793 and 1794 a series of crises threatened to destroy the new national government:
- France tried to entangle America in its war with England;
 - Armed rebellion erupted in western Pennsylvania;
 - Indians in Ohio threatened American expansion; and
 - War with Britain appeared imminent...” (D)
- 1793, Feb. 1: France declares war on Great Britain, Spain, and Holland.
- 1793, April 22: Washington issues a proclamation of neutrality.
Document: [The Proclamation of Neutrality, 1793](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/neutra93.htm>] (A)
- 1794 summer: The Battle of Fallen Timbers
General Anthony Wayne defeats the Indians of Ohio. More settlers will be moving into the frontier.
Brief Secondary Account: [Fallen Timbers Battlefield](#)
[http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/propage/OH/oh-9_h_kaptur5.html] (L)
- 1794, Nov. 19: Jay’s Treaty signed.
Document: [The Jay Treaty of 1794](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/jaymenu.htm>] (A)
Brief Secondary Account: [John Jay’s Treaty](#)
[<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/nr/14318.htm>]
“The only concessions Jay obtained” were “a surrender of the northwestern posts – already agreed to in 1783--and a commercial treaty with Great Britain that granted the United States “most favored nation” status, but seriously restricted U.S. commercial access to the British West Indies. All other outstanding issues – the Canadian-Maine boundary, compensation for pre-revolutionary debts, and British seizures of American ships – were to be resolved by arbitration. Jay even conceded that the British could seize U.S. goods bound for France if they paid for them and could confiscate without payment French goods on American ships. The treaty was immensely unpopular....” (F)
- “In 1794, President George Washington sent Monroe to France as the U.S. minister, a title equivalent to ambassador in those days. It was an eventful appointment that lasted two years. Monroe and his family became avid Francophiles. They learned to speak French fluently, socialized with French celebrities, adopted French taste in food and dress, and sent their daughter to the best French academy in Paris. When Thomas Paine, the great British pamphleteer and radical supporter of the American Revolution, was imprisoned for having spoken against the execution of

King Louis XVI, Monroe won his release and allowed Paine to live for a time with his family at the American minister's residence in Paris. However, Monroe's popularity with the French strained his relationship with President Washington. At issue was Washington's strict neutrality toward England and France. When the United States signed the controversial Jay's Treaty with Great Britain, which did little to settle the issue of English violation of American rights on the high seas, Monroe refused to actively defend the treaty against French objections. For his silence, Washington recalled him." (J)

1796, Sept. 17:

Washington's Farewell Address

Document: [Washington's Farewell Address](#)

[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>]

"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." (A)

Brief Secondary Account: [Washington's Farewell Address](#)

[<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/nr/14319.htm>]

"Frustrated by French meddling in U.S. politics, Washington warned the nation to avoid permanent alliances with foreign nations and to rely instead on temporary alliances for emergencies. Washington's efforts to protect the fragile young republic by steering a neutral course between England and France during the French Revolutionary Wars was made extremely difficult by the intense rhetoric flowing from the pro-English Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, and the pro-French, personified by Thomas Jefferson." (F)

1797 April:

John Adams becomes president.

Brief Secondary Account: [The Presidency of John Adams](#)

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=10]

"During Adams's presidency, the United States faced its most serious international crisis yet: an undeclared naval war with France. In the Jay Treaty, France perceived an American tilt toward Britain, especially in a provision permitting the British to seize French goods from American ships in exchange for financial compensation. France retaliated by capturing hundreds of vessels flying the U.S. flag.

...The Federalist-controlled Congress prepared for war by authorizing a 20,000-man army and calling George Washington out of retirement as commander in chief. During the winter of 1798, an undeclared naval war took place between France and the United States." (D)

1798-1800:

Undeclared Naval War (Quasi War) with France

Documents: [The Quasi War with France, 1791-1800](#)

[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/quasi.htm>] (A)

- 1800: Treaty of San Ildefonso
Spain secretly cedes Louisiana back to France.
Document: [Treaty of San Ildefonso: Retrocession of Louisiana from Spain to France](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ildefens.htm) [<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ildefens.htm>] (A)
- 1801: Thomas Jefferson becomes president.
- 1803: Louisiana Purchase Negotiations and Treaty
“In 1803, the victorious Jefferson sent Monroe as a special envoy to France to help negotiate the Louisiana Purchase.” (J)
Documents: [Louisiana Purchase Treaty](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/france/fr1803m.htm) [<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/france/fr1803m.htm>] (A)
Brief Secondary Account: [The Louisiana Purchase](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=16) [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=16] (D)

“From 1803 to 1807, Monroe served as the U.S. minister to Great Britain, an unproductive stint in which he failed to persuade the British to stop the impressment of U.S. sailors on the high seas and failed to convince Spain to settle the disputed boundaries in Florida.” (J)
- 1803 May: France declares war on Great Britain.
Brief Secondary Account: [The Eagle, the Tiger, and the Shark](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=18) [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=18] (D)
- 1807, Dec. 22: Embargo of 1807
Brief Secondary Account: [Embargo of 1807](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=19) [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=19]
“In effect for 15 months, the embargo exacted no political concessions from either France or Britain. But it had produced economic hardship, evasion of the law, and political dissension at home... The problem of defending American right on the high seas now fell to Jefferson’s hand-picked successor, James Madison.” (D)
- 1808-1814: The Napoleonic War, known in Spanish history as the War of Independence. Ferdinand VII, the king of Spain who had great popularity when he assumed the throne in 1808, is eventually imprisoned in France.
- 1810, May 14: West Florida declared part of the Mississippi Territory by Congress.
Map: [The United States in 1810](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/TERRITORY/1810map.html) [<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/TERRITORY/1810map.html>] (M)

- 1811, Nov. 7: Battle of Tippecanoe
Despite heavy losses, troops under General William Henry Harrison defeat Native Americans commanded by Tecumseh. Many Americans believe the British had been responsible for inciting the Native Americans.
- “...just before the outbreak of the War of 1812, President Madison named Monroe his secretary of state. He remained at the post until 1817 and also functioned for a time as Madison’s secretary of war. In this latter capacity, Monroe unsuccessfully tried to institute a compulsory draft, settling instead for an increase of land bounties to entice more volunteers to join the U.S. Army for the duration of the war with England. He was successful, however, in stabilizing a deteriorating situation and prevented an outright U.S. defeat by the British in the War of 1812.” (J)
- 1812, June 18: Congress declares war against Great Britain.
Document: [1812—Declaration of War with Great Britain](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/1812-01.htm)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/1812-01.htm>] (A)
Brief Secondary Account: [A Second War of Independence](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=20)
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=20] (D)
- 1812-1819: Five new states added to the Union.
Brief Secondary Account: [Conquering Space](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=572)
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=572] (D)
- 1814: Ferdinand VII is restored to the Spanish throne. He immediately assumes absolute power, dismisses the Cadiz Corte (Spain’s representative assembly which first met in 1810), and revokes the 1812 Constitution—which had been a revolutionary document for Spain. During years of chaos in Spain, its American colonies began proclaiming themselves independent. Most established republican governments.
- 1814, Dec. 24: Peace Treaty with Great Britain
Document: [Treaty of Ghent](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/ghent.htm)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/ghent.htm>] (A)
Brief Secondary Account: [The War’s Significance](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=22)
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=22]
“...the War of 1812 was crucial for the United States. First, it effectively destroyed the Indians’ ability to resist American expansion east of the Mississippi River... Second, the war allowed the United States to rewrite its boundaries with Spain and solidify control over the lower Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Although the United States did not defeat the British Empire, it had fought the world’s strongest power to a draw. Spain recognized the significance of this fact, and in 1819 Spanish leaders abandoned Florida and agreed to an American boundary running clear to the Pacific Ocean.” (D)

- 1816 December: The Barbary Treaties
Document: [The Barbary Treaties](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/barbary/bar1816t.htm>]
(A)
- 1817, March 4: James Monroe becomes president.
Brief Secondary Account: [The Growth of American Nationalism](#)
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=567] (D)
Brief Secondary Account: [Defending American Interests in Foreign Affairs](#)
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=573]
“The critical foreign policy issue facing the United States after the War of 1812 was the fate of Spain’s crumbling New World empire. Many of Spain’s New World colonies had taken advantage of turmoil in Europe during the Napoleonic Wars to fight for their independence. These revolutions aroused intense sympathy in the United States, but many Americans feared that European powers might restore monarchical order in Spain’s New World.
- A source of particular concern was Florida, which was still under Spanish control. Pirates, fugitive slaves, and Native Americans used Florida as a sanctuary and as a jumping off point for raids on settlements in Georgia. In December 1817, to end these incursions, Monroe authorized General Andrew Jackson to lead a punitive expedition against the Seminole Indians in Florida. Jackson attacked the Seminoles, destroyed their villages, and overthrew the Spanish governor. He also court-martialed and executed two British citizens whom he accused of inciting the Seminoles to commit atrocities against Americans.
- Jackson’s actions provoked a furor in Washington. . . . Secretary of State Adams, however, saw in Jackson’s actions an opportunity to wrest Florida from Spain. Instead of apologizing for Jackson’s conduct, Adams declared that the Florida raid was a legitimate act. . . .
- The Era of Good Feelings marked one of the most successful periods in American diplomacy. Apart from ending the attacks of the Barbary pirates on American shipping, the United States settled many of its disagreements with Britain, acquired Florida from Spain, defined its western and southwestern boundaries, convinced Spain to relinquish its claims to the Oregon region, and delivered a strong warning that European powers were not to interfere in the Western Hemisphere.” (D)

- 1817 April: *Document:* [Exchange of Notes 1817: Proclamation Relative to Naval Forces on the American Lakes, a.k.a. Rush-Bagot Treaty](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/britian/br1817p.htm>] (A)
- 1819 February: Spain sells Florida to the United States and sets a definite border between Spanish possessions and the Louisiana Territory.
Document: [Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits between the United States of America and His Catholic Majesty](#), a.k.a. Adams-Onis Treaty for Secretary Adams and his Spanish counterpart, the foreign minister
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/diplomacy/spain/sp1819.htm>] (A)
- 1820: *Map:* [The United States in 1820](#)
[<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/TERRITORY/1820map.html>] (M)
- A revolution in Spain temporarily reinstates the liberal constitution of 1812.
- 1822: France, delegated by the “Holy Alliance,” restores Ferdinand VII to absolute power.
- Brazil declares its independence from Portugal.
- 1823, Dec. 2: [Monroe Doctrine](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/monroe.htm>] (A)

Other Online Document Resources

- [Annual Messages of the Presidents](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/sou/sou.htm>] (A)
- [Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents](#)
[<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/inaug.htm>] (A)

Print Resource

Morris, Jeffrey B., and Richard B. Morris, eds. *Encyclopedia of American History*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.