

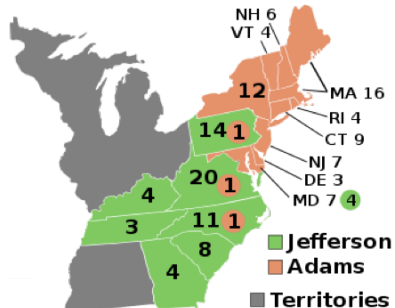
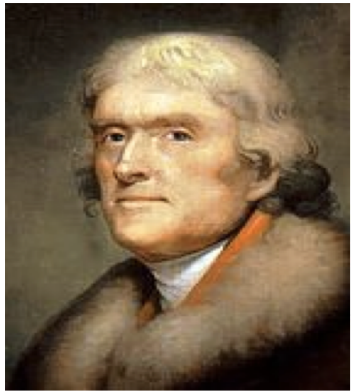
SSUSH6: ANALYZE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE FIRST FIVE PRESIDENTS AND HOW THEY RESPONDED.



ELEMENT B: Explain the presidency of John Adams including the Sedition Act and its influence on the election of 1800.

Election of 1796

- ❑ George Washington's voluntary retirement from the presidency after serving two terms in office left the nation divided over who should be elected the second President of the United States.
- ❑ The election of 1796 was a bitter contest between John Adams, a Federalist, and Thomas Jefferson, a Democratic-Republican.
 - The political parties George Washington had warned against were driving the election to determine his successor.
 - Adams won by only a 71-68 margin in the Electoral College.
 - George Washington's elections in 1789 and 1792 were both unanimous.
 - Under the provisions of the Constitution as it was originally written, the candidate who received the highest number of votes (over 50%) in the Electoral College would be the President and the candidate with the second highest number of votes would serve as the Vice President.
 - This format quickly presented problems in the 1796 election.
 - The Federalist John Adams became the President and the leading Democratic-Republican, Thomas Jefferson, became the Vice President.
 - The difficulties presented by this arrangement became apparent very quickly.
 - Adams' victory by such a close vote indicates the division that had emerged between the political ideologies of the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. Adams only served one term in office and he faced significant challenges during his presidency.



John Adams, Prior to Presidency

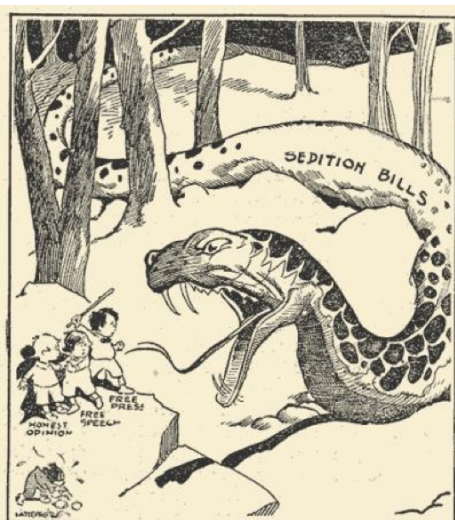
- ❑ Entering the presidency, John Adams had already amassed an impressive record of government experience.
 - He had supported the Patriot cause in Boston leading up to the Revolutionary War.
 - He participated in the Continental Congress and was part of the Committee of Five tasked with drafting the Declaration of Independence.
 - During the Revolutionary War, John Adams traveled Europe to help secure support for the new nation.
 - He also helped to negotiate the Treaty of Paris in 1783 that ended the war and remained in Europe to help secure trade deals for the United States.
- ❑ After the new Constitution was ratified, John Adams was elected to serve as the country's first Vice President under George Washington.
- ❑ Given this vast political and international experience, Adams was well-qualified for his new position as President of the United States.



Presidency of John Adams

- ❑ Like Washington, John Adams set precedents that influenced future presidents as well as the course of American history.
- ❑ However, his administration was plagued by conflicts with France and Great Britain that crippled the nation's economy.
 - The financial difficulties and international conflict led Democratic-Republicans, including Vice President Thomas Jefferson, to vehemently criticize John Adams.
 - To subdue the Democratic-Republican opposition, the Federalist controlled Congress and Federalist President passed the Alien and Sedition Acts.
 - These laws increased citizenship requirements so that Jefferson, and the Democratic-Republicans, could not receive support from the immigrant community.
 - The citizenship requirement for the naturalization process was extended from five to fourteen years.
 - The law also attempted to stop any criticism of the Federalists by limiting free speech and press rights.

- The “Alien” provision of the policy gave the executive branch the power to deport any immigrant aliens subjectively deemed as dangerous.
- The “Sedition” policy made it a crime for United States citizens to conspire against legal measures passed by the government, interfere with the business of government officials, or to promote insurrection.
- Of greater impact was the provision in the law that made it a crime to write, publish, or speak anything of “a false, scandalous and malicious nature” about the government or elected officials.
- Democratic-Republicans, with their propaganda filled newspapers and pamphlets, were the target of these laws.



AS GAG-RULERS WOULD HAVE IT.

—Satterfield in the Jersey City Journal.

Alien and Sedition Acts

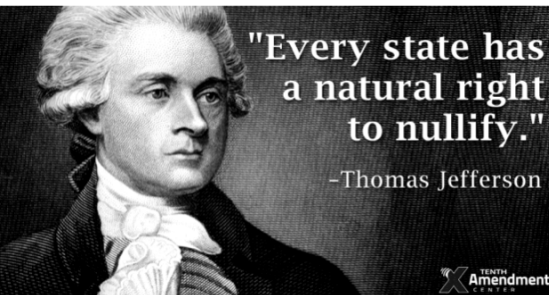
**RESOLUTIONS
OF
VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY;**

PENED BY
MADISON AND JEFFERSON,

IN RELATION TO THE
ALIEN AND SEDITION LAWS.

Ita lex scripta est.

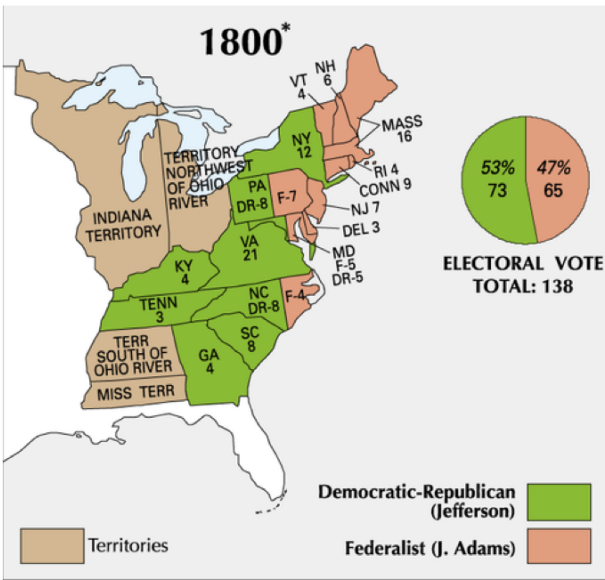
RICHMOND:
Printed by Shepherd & Pollard.
1826.



- ❑ Thomas Jefferson and fellow Democratic-Republican James Madison reacted to the Alien and Sedition Acts. They argued in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions that states could refuse to enforce federal laws they opposed.
 - Both states passed laws in their state level legislatures in 1798 condemning the Alien and Sedition Acts as violating constitutional rights.
 - Virginia and Kentucky claimed the Constitution itself was an agreement among states and therefore the states should assess whether the laws passed at the national level had overstepped their boundaries.
 - This was the beginning of the states' rights concept.
- ❑ The country's growing economic problems, increasing taxes, and unpopular Alien and Sedition Acts hurt John Adams' chances of re-election in 1800.
- ❑ The election was heated and the political rivalry between the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans intensified.
 - The Federalists portrayed the Democratic-Republicans as too sympathetic to the French Revolution and suggested that power in their hands could drag the United States into war.
 - The Democratic-Republicans emphasized the danger Federalists posed to individual liberties as Adams secured more power at the national level.
 - The campaign was divisive and not even the Federalist Party was unified. Hamilton's followers questioned Adams' resolve against France and fractured their own Federalist Party.

Election of 1800

- ❑ The results of the Election of 1800 gave power in the executive and legislative branches to the Democratic-Republican Party.
- ❑ There was, however, a snag in the Electoral College process.
 - Thomas Jefferson tied with his Democratic-Republican partner for the Vice Presidency, Aaron Burr.
 - Each man had 73 Electoral College votes, thus throwing the election to the House of Representatives.
 - This was the procedure outlined by the Constitution in the case of an Electoral College tie.
- ❑ The House of Representative was controlled by the Federalist Party at the time of the election and was given then responsibility of deciding the election.
 - Their choice was between two Democratic-Republicans, Thomas Jefferson or Aaron Burr.
 - Alexander Hamilton was still a very influential Federalist and when the House of Representatives was not able to secure a decisive vote after thirty-five ballots, the party turned to him for direction.
 - Although both choices were Democratic-Republican candidates, Hamilton much preferred Thomas Jefferson over Aaron Burr.
 - Hamilton and Burr were both from New York and had deep distaste for one another.
 - Hamilton believed Jefferson to have more character than Burr and would be more suitable for the office of President based on his personal reputation. The Federalist legislators in the House of Representatives followed Hamilton's lead and voted for Jefferson instead of Burr.



Election of 1800

- ❑ The Election of 1800 was largely based on the differing political ideologies of the two parties.
 - John Adams had lost the support of many Americans with the Alien and Sedition Acts, which the Democratic-Republicans portrayed as a threat to civil liberties.
 - As more people began to support Thomas Jefferson's party and the Federalists began to fracture from within, the Election of 1800 transferred the federal government's power from one party to another.
 - The nation transitioned from the Federalist's more centralized government approach to a more de-centralized government under the Democratic-Republicans, with the states having more power.
 - The question, however, was whether Thomas Jefferson would be able to shift power back to the states and the American people once he took office.
- ❑ John Adams' one term as president was challenging.
 - In addition to following the highly revered George Washington, he was faced with mounting opposition from the Democratic-Republicans.
 - Adams' approach to controlling his rivals through the Alien and Sedition Acts cost him even more support as some Americans feared their individual rights were being restricted.
 - He faced difficult negotiations with the French over their harassment of US ships.
 - The resulting XYZ Affair is another key event from John Adams' presidency that impacted his political career and the outcome of the Election of 1800.

