

# Part Two: Educator's Notebook— *Using the 100 Milestone*

The Educator's Notebook section of the resource book provides suggestions for ways to effectively use primary source documents in the classroom and place documents into historical context. This section of the resource book also contains the list of the 100 milestone documents. Again, the documents themselves are not reprinted here. To find copies of the documents, visit the *Our Documents* Web site at [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov). The documents will be posted with supporting materials in chronological order in groups of three documents each week. The Educator's Notebook also includes a brief discussion of key themes that emerge in the documents, a timeline placing the documents in chronological perspective, and some suggestions for relating History Day projects to the 100 documents. *A More Perfect Union* is reprinted here to place several of the key documents into historical context. Three suggested lesson plans also follow, which include reference to specific milestone documents: the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, the Thomas Edison Patent Application (which includes a comparison with Alexander Graham Bell's Patent Application), and the *Brown v Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Finally, a bibliography of works related to the milestone documents also is included in this section of the resource book.

# Documents in the Classroom

## List of the 100 Milestone Documents

The following is a list of the 100 milestone documents, compiled by the National Archives and Records Administration, and drawn primarily from its nationwide holdings. The documents chronicle United States history from 1776 to 1965<sup>1</sup>.

The list begins with the Lee Resolution of June 7, 1776, a simple document resolving that the United Colonies “are, and of right, ought to be free and independent states. . .” and ends with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a statute that helped fulfill the promise of freedom inherent in the first documents on the list. The remaining milestone documents are among the thousands of public laws, Supreme Court decisions, inaugural speeches, treaties, constitutional amendments, and other documents that have influenced the course of United States history. These documents have helped shape the national character of the United States, and they reflect the diversity, the unity, and the commitment of this nation to continue to work toward forming “a more perfect union.”

<sup>1</sup> The decision not to include milestone documents since 1965 was a deliberate acknowledgement of the difficulty in examining more recent history. As stated in the guidelines for the National History Standards, developed by the National Center for History in the Schools, “Historians can never attain complete objectivity, but they tend to fall shortest of the goal when they deal with current or very recent events.”

1. Lee Resolution, 1776
2. Declaration of Independence, 1776
3. Articles of Confederation, 1777
4. Treaty of Alliance with France, 1778
5. Original Design of the Great Seal of the United States, 1782
6. Treaty of Paris, 1783
7. Virginia Plan, 1787
8. Northwest Ordinance, 1787
9. Constitution of the United States, 1787
10. Federalist Paper No. 10, 1787; No. 51, 1788 \*\*
11. President George Washington’s First Inaugural Speech, 1789
12. Federal Judiciary Act, 1789
13. Bill of Rights, 1791
14. Patent for the Cotton Gin, 1794
15. President George Washington’s Farewell Address, 1796 \*\*
16. Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798
17. Jefferson’s Secret Message to Congress Regarding Exploration of the West, 1803
18. Louisiana Purchase Treaty, 1803
19. *Marbury v Madison*, 1803
20. The Treaty of Ghent, 1814
21. *McCulloch v Maryland*, 1819
22. Missouri Compromise, 1820
23. Monroe Doctrine, 1823
24. *Gibbons v Ogden*, 1824
25. President Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress “On Indian Removal,” 1830
26. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848
27. Compromise of 1850
28. Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854
29. *Dred Scott v Sanford*, 1857
30. Telegram Announcing the Surrender of Fort Sumter, 1861
31. Homestead Act, 1862
32. Pacific Railway Act, 1862
33. Morrill Act, 1862
34. Emancipation Proclamation, 1863
35. War Department General Order 143: Creation of the U.S. Colored Troops, 1863
36. Gettysburg Address, 1863 \*\*
37. Wade-Davis Bill, 1864
38. President Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, 1865 \*\*
39. Articles of Agreement Relating to the Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, 1865
40. 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Abolition of Slavery, 1865
41. Check for the Purchase of Alaska, 1868
42. Treaty of Fort Laramie, 1868
43. 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Civil Rights, 1868
44. 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Voting Rights, 1870

45. Act Establishing Yellowstone National Park, 1872
46. Thomas Edison's Patent Application for the Light Bulb, 1880
47. Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882
48. Pendleton Act, 1883
49. Interstate-Commerce Act, 1887
50. Dawes Act, 1887
51. Sherman Anti-Trust Act, 1890
52. *Plessy v Ferguson*, 1896
53. De Lome Letter, 1898
54. Joint Resolution to Provide for Annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States, 1898
55. Platt Amendment, 1903
56. Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1905
57. 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Federal Income Tax, 1913
58. U.S. 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Direct Election of Senators, 1913
59. Keating-Owen Child Labor Act, 1916
60. Zimmermann Telegram, 1917
61. Joint Address to Congress Leading to a Declaration of War Against Germany, 1917
62. President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points, 1918
63. 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote, 1920
64. Boulder Canyon Project Act, 1928
65. Tennessee Valley Authority Act, 1933
66. National Industrial Recovery Act, 1933
67. National Labor Relations Act, 1935
68. Social Security Act, 1935
69. President Franklin Roosevelt's Radio Address unveiling second half of the New Deal, 1936
70. President Franklin Roosevelt's Annual Message to Congress, 1941
71. Lend Lease Act, 1941
72. Executive Order 8802: Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry, 1941
73. Joint Address to Congress Leading to a Declaration of War Against Japan, 1941
74. Executive Order 9066: Japanese Relocation Order, 1942
75. Eisenhower's Order of the Day, June 6, 1944
76. Servicemen's Readjustment Act, 1944
77. Manhattan Project Notebook, 1945
78. Surrender of Germany, 1945
79. United Nations Charter, 1945
80. Surrender of Japan, 1945
81. Truman Doctrine, 1947
82. Marshall Plan, 1948
83. Press Release Announcing U.S. Recognition of Israel, 1948
84. Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces, 1948
85. Armistice Agreement for the Restoration of the South Korean State, 1953
86. Senate Resolution 301: Censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy, 1954
87. *Brown v Board of Education*, 1954
88. National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, 1956
89. Executive Order 10730: Desegregation of Central High School, 1957
90. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address, 1961
91. President John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, 1961
92. Executive Order 10924: Establishment of the Peace Corps, 1961
93. Transcript of John Glenn's Official Communication With the Command Center, 1962
94. Aerial Photograph of Missiles in Cuba, 1962
95. Test Ban Treaty, 1963
96. Official Program for the March on Washington, 1963
97. Civil Rights Act, 1964
98. Tonkin Gulf Resolution, 1964
99. Social Security Act Amendments, 1965
100. Voting Rights Act, 1965

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**All of the documents listed above are in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, except where noted with an \*\*.**

# *Rights, Responsibilities, & the 100 Milestone Documents:* **Some Key Themes**

## **Theme One: The Nation and the Wider World**

**A** key theme evident in the documents collected here is that of rights, responsibilities and the nation's relationship to the rest of the world. Our first milestone document, the Lee Resolution, stated 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." Accordingly, the united colonies had a right to be independent of Britain and were assuming responsibility for themselves. Toward that end, concluded the Resolution, "it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances." In assuming their rights as members of an independent nation, the stewards of this new nation immediately set out to renegotiate their relations with other nations.

What kinds of rights did the rebelling Americans assume they had as members of a newly independent nation? What kinds of responsibilities? Certainly, the Declaration of Independence implied what kinds of rights the Americans believed they had in describing how they had been wronged.

A National History Day project might examine how the Lee Resolution led to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, or explore the reaction of the British people to the Declaration. Did the British have different ideas about freedom than the American colonists had in 1776? Also reflective of this theme is the Treaty of Alliance (1778) with France. This treaty gave the Americans a vital ally in their attempt to secure rights as members of their own nation, and in turn the revolutionaries took on the responsibility of pledging their support to France, should France go to war against Britain. Such assertions of rights and pledges of responsibility were and are at the core of our international relationships.

**the core of  
our international  
relationships**

The Northwest Ordinance, the purchases of the Louisiana territory and Alaska, the Treaty with Cuba after the War with Spain, and the annexation of Hawaii all involved a range of assumptions and beliefs about the rights and responsibilities of peoples of different nations and cultures. The Declaration of War against Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the surrender of Germany and Japan to the Allies in 1945, concerned a different set of ideas about rights and responsibilities: those involving nations at war. All of these documents would form excellent bases for projects and lesson plans exploring relations between the United States and the wider world.

## Theme Two: Individuals and Society

A second theme present in the milestone documents relates to individuals and society. The Bill of Rights, written expressly to ensure the rights of individuals in our political system, is the clearest expression of the national ideal that the rights of individuals deserve deep respect. What kinds of responsibilities, we might ask, are implied in the 10 Amendments that comprise the Bill of Rights? A History Day project might involve researching the process by which these 10 Amendments were selected.

Other key documents related to individuals and society are the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Executive Order 9066 authorizing Japanese relocation during the Second World War. What was happening in 1942 that caused Franklin Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 9066? A History Day project might compare and contrast the factors leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act and those leading to Executive Order 9066. Were Chinese and Japanese Americans regarded in similar ways in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?

## Theme Three: State and Federal Power

“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” So states the 10th Amendment to the Constitution in a deceptively simple phrasing of a historically controversial issue in the history of American rights and responsibilities. When, where, and how should the federal government exercise power, and when should that power be exercised by the states? *Our Documents* seeks to encourage exactly this kind of debate among students and teachers. The Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation precisely because many came to believe that the Articles could no longer effectively hold the nation together. Yet the debate over state vs. federal power would rage during the next 75 years as Americans tried to decide whether the states or the federal government should have the final say in the spread, and later, the existence, of slavery in the nation. The Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the 13th Amendment, collectively and separately form a window into the issue of state and federal power, as well as the issue of slavery. Why were there struggles over the admission of slave states into the Union in the early 19th century? Could the federal government abolish slavery? History Day projects might examine the documents mentioned above for insight into the conflicts and compromises surrounding state and federal power that have absorbed Americans from the nation’s earliest days.

# the debate over federal vs. state power

State and federal power do not have to be viewed exclusively in relation to each other, as a look at key documents related to the Great Depression of the 1930s shows. Americans looked to the federal government for assistance during the economic tragedy of the Depression, and the government sought to address the crisis through passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Social Security Act, and the National Labor Relations Act. The 20th century has seen an expansion of federal power on behalf of groups as diverse as children (Keating-Owen Child Labor Act of 1916) and former soldiers (Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, 1944). *Our Documents* History Day projects and teacher lesson plans might focus on the expansion of that power.

## Theme Four: Commerce and Regulation

In an effort to highlight the national emphasis on commercial affairs that has been present from our earliest years, the *Our Documents* initiative also encourages exploration of key documents related to commerce and regulation.

Soon after the first patent statute requiring drawings of inventions was enacted in the United States, Eli Whitney applied for a patent for his cotton gin, a device that revolutionized the cotton trade and transformed the South. The patent comprises one of our key documents, along with Edison's patent application for the light bulb. A whole host of commercially related rights and responsibilities issues can be addressed in a look at such patents. Why do we need patents? What are the rights and responsibilities of inventors? What innovations did Whitney and Edison introduce to make their inventions worth patenting? With the new inventions of the Industrial Revolution came new attention to industry regulation.

The *Our Documents* initiative contains several other milestone documents that established the government's power to regulate business, including the *Gibbons v Ogden* case (1824), which affirms Congress' right to regulate commerce among the states, and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890, which outlawed business trusts that thwarted competition. The rights and responsibilities of businesses remain contested issues, and several milestone documents offer windows into a range of discussions related to inventors, their inventions, and the role of business and commerce in national history.

# the rights and responsibilities of inventors

There are other historical themes represented in the documents that are not expressed here. The themes mentioned above, moreover, overlap in several documents. The *Brown v Board of Education* decision, for example, can be linked to the theme of individuals and society, as it concerns the rights of young African Americans to attend schools equal in quality to those of whites. The *Brown* decision, however, also can be connected to the issue of state and federal power, as it declares state school segregation unconstitutional. Many local schools resisted the Supreme Court's decision, refusing to integrate their schools because they believed such decisions should be made locally. Different themes can be combined, and new themes will emerge as the documents are explored in greater depth. This kind of combination and exploration is encouraged.