

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICA

### GREAT AMERICANS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

#### LESSON 05 SESSION 01

##### 5.1 The Colonial Spirit

Three hundred years ago America was a wilderness. Her total white population consisted of a few hundred men, women, and children, established in several small communities along the Atlantic seaboard. For the most part they were a God-fearing people, led to America by the vision of a new land in which they could work out ideals and visions inspired by their deep religious convictions. Along with these groups were others of more worldly persuasion, who came in the spirit of adventure or to escape political conditions, which, in the changing reign of the rulers of England, made their move advisable.

##### 5.2 Colonists largely representative

As a whole the colonists were largely representative of the life, thought, and aspirations of that period; they were not supermen and women any more than they were of the vicious type. They were moved by the impulses common to humanity, chief of which is always that of self-preservation.

##### 5.3 A continent to conquer

Here they found a vast and unknown continent in the possession of roving tribes of Indians; a wilderness of great forests, mighty rivers, and boundless prairies. It was theirs for the taking, if they possessed the ability and courage to conquer the all but insurmountable obstacles and dangers.

###### 5.3.1 Limited facilities.

Forced by lack of any other means than those contained in hand and brain; lacking all facilities of communication, transportation, or manufacture, other than such contrivances as the sailing vessel, the ax, spinning wheel, wooden plow, and flint-lock rifle, their progress in the first 150 years was necessarily slow and restricted.

### 5.3.2 Chief pursuits, agriculture and seafaring.

The colonists labored under the burden of heavy restrictions imposed by the mother country which prevented the establishment of home industries. As their first occupation they engaged in tilling the soil that they might have food and clothing.

During her first 150 years of existence, America grew to be a people of some 3,000,000 souls and was forced to confine her development to agriculture and seafaring pursuits. Building up a seafaring trade, she transported the raw material of the new land to England, France, Holland, and Spain, there to be exchanged for the necessities of life not produced by their own handicraft.

## 5.4 **The federation of the colonies**

Industrial progress came with the establishment of the new Nation, "The United States of America." Lacking capital, other than that of character, courage, and concentrated labor, the bankrupt colonies were welded into a union of action which has led our Nation by successive stages to its present attainments, the marvel and wonder of modern time.

## 5.5 **Encouraged by constitutional provisions**

In the Government set up under the Constitution provision was made for a freedom of action which gives full play to every citizen in the exercise of his rights and powers. The wisdom of the law of our land is emphasized with each passing year. The remarkable economic development of America is based upon the liberties and restrictions granted as the equal right of all her citizens. Outstanding among these provisions are:

### 5.5.1 The money clause.

The money clause establishes credit through the sole power vested in the Federal Government to coin money, incur national obligations through issue of bonds or notes of indebtedness, establishment of our national bank, and later our Federal Reserve Bank system, forbidding any State from incurring financial obligations with foreign powers or other States.

### 5.5.2 The post-office clause.

The post-office clause, through which communication is regulated between the States and with the world at large, is a duty alone of the National Government. In this clause are found the rules and regulations governing mail, telegraph and telephone lines, and the radio. Strict regulations hold all accountable for matter

transmitted by mail, as to its truthful or fraudulent character; rates are fixed by the Government with equal application to all.

5.5.3 The commerce clause.

The commerce clause set up an agency of exceptional worth by reason of the freedom granted in interstate traffic, the elimination of barriers, duties, or restrictions which might otherwise be created in exchange, sale, and shipment from State to State. Citizens of any State have equal rights as citizens of the United States, subject only to such local laws as apply to all citizens of the State within which business is transacted.

5.5.4 The taxing clause.

The taxing clause permits taxes to be levied for the requirements of government only; such taxes are to be uniform in application and subject to revision as necessity governs.

5.5.5 The naturalization clause.

The naturalization clause establishes one class of citizens only; with equality to all and privilege to none. Under this and the immigration acts our Nation is assured a strength and unity of purpose and action and an equality of citizenship that could not otherwise be attained.

5.5.6 Fixed terms of office.

Fixed terms of office: Our system of government by which definite terms of office are assured, gives stability to business in the fact that, in no crisis, can an administration be overthrown in a day, through dissolution of Congress or the resignation of the Cabinet. Parties may rise and fall without serious effect upon our economic life.