



The history of the USA



According to archeologists, the present-day United States was first populated by people from Asia sometime between 50,000 and 11,000 years ago.

The beginning

The present-day United States was first populated by people migrating from Asia (now they are called Native Americans) who inhabited America before the arrival of European explorers in the 15th century. Later, the area was a British colony.

On July 4, 1776, the United States was born when 13 British colonies in North America declared their independence. Though the colonies did not have a professional army like the British, they were helped by Britain's old enemies France and Spain. There was a war, which ended in 1783 with an American victory.

In 1787, the United States **drafted** a constitution, and in 1789 George Washington became the first President of the United States. This was the beginning of the so called "experiment in democracy".

19th century America - the Civil War

America expanded greatly in the 19th century. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson bought the Louisiana territory from Napoleon Bonaparte of France. The Louisiana Purchase added 2.1 million square km to the US.

This period also saw many wars. In 1812, the US went to war again with Britain, and was victorious after three

years. But the biggest and the bloodiest war America fought was the Civil War, 1861 - 1865.

The southern states tried to leave the union because they did not want **slavery** to be **abolished**. They formed a new country, the Confederate States of America, and went to war with the US. After four bloody years, the industrial North was able to defeat the **agrarian** South, and the war came to an end. President Abraham Lincoln wanted to allow the South to re-join the union without **penalty**, but he was **assassinated** just as the war ended. Without Lincoln, the US

→ Vocabulary

- to draft** [dra:ft] - načrtnout, sepsat
- slavery** ['sleɪv(ə)rɪ] - otroctví
- to abolish** [ə'bɒlɪʃ] - zrušit
- agrarian** [ə'grɛ:rɪən] - zemědělský
- penalty** ['pen(ə)ltɪ] - trest
- to assassinate** [ə'sæsɪneɪt] - zavraždit
- to drop** - shodit
- natural resources** ['nætʃ(ə)r(ə)l rɪ'sɔ:sɪz] - přírodní zdroje
- involvement** [ɪn'vɒlv(m)ənt] - angažovanost
- to deny** [di'naɪ] - popřít

Patrick Philips (USA)

punished the South for the rebellion, and kept soldiers in the former Confederate states for twelve years. This is something southerners still cannot forget.

In 1898, the US went to war against Spain, and won from them many islands including Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

The 20th century and the Cold War

In the 20th century, the US became one of the most dominant powers in the world. America participated in both world wars during this time, and ended WWII as one of two superpowers (the USSR was the other).

The Atomic Age began in 1945 when the US **dropped** A-bombs on Japan. This ended WWII, but afterwards the US and USSR began a contest to dominate the world. The Cold War lasted over forty years and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. While the Soviets were able to compete in technology, they could not match America's economy and **natural resources**.

Today the US is the only superpower in the world, and because of this many countries do not like America. American **involvement** in the Middle East has been very unpopular, and many people dislike American domination of world markets and politics. Though the US may not be as popular as it once was, no one can **deny** the experiment in democracy has been a success.



COLD MOUNTAIN (USA, 2003)

The American Civil War is impressively portrayed in this movie telling the story of a seriously wounded confederate soldier (Jude Law) who sets on a journey back home to Cold Mountain, North Carolina to see his girlfriend (Nicole Kidman). During his long journey through the post-war confederacy, he meets various people who want to either help or stop his mission.