



Reader's Guide

Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Biographies presents in two volumes the life stories of fifty-one men and women who played key roles from 1783 to 1815 when the United States was forged into a politically and economically independent nation. Individuals from all walks of life are included. They all took an active role in the creation and early development of the United States whether they were aware of it at the time or not. Some were Founding Fathers who signed the 1776 Declaration of Independence and drafted the U.S. Constitution at the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Many held prominent national positions in government, religious organizations, educational institutions, businesses, and the military. Some were victims of the swift national growth. Native Americans lost extensive life and their lands to the onslaught of frontier expansion. African slaves were vital to the economic growth of the South at the expense of all personal freedoms. They all guided America through its first years as a nation in some way.

Coverage and features

In *Biographies*, part of the amazing legacy of the period are the sons of Virginia—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson,

John Marshall, James Madison, and James Monroe—all born within 150 miles of each other to wealthy and influential families. In addition to Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, two other presidents of the era are featured— John Adams and James Monroe—as well as a future president, Andrew Jackson. Other biographees are first ladies Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, and Dolley Madison; treasury secretaries Alexander Hamilton and Albert Gallatin; diplomat Benjamin Franklin; Supreme Court chief justice John Jay; Secretary of War Henry Knox; Attorney General Edmund Randolph; authors Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Mercy Otis Warren; black social activists Benjamin Banneker, Elizabeth Freeman, and Prince Hall; religious leaders Richard Allen, Francis Asbury, John Carroll, Absalom Jones, and John Witherspoon; educators Elizabeth Ann Seton and Sarah Pierce; inventor and engineer Eli Whitney; midwife and health care giver Martha Ballard; Native American leaders Little Turtle, Alexander McGillivray, and Tecumseh; explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark; and many more.

Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Biographies also features sidebars containing interesting facts about people and events related to early America. Within each full-length biography, boldfaced cross-references direct readers to other individuals profiled in the two-volume set. Finally, each volume includes approximately 125 black-and-white illustrations; a timeline of important events of the era; a Words to Know section that introduces students to difficult or unfamiliar terms (terms are also defined within the text); a general bibliography; and a cumulative subject index.

Shaping of America, 1783–1815 Reference Library

Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Biographies is only one component of the three-part U•X•L Shaping of America, 1783–1815 Reference Library. The other two titles in this set are:

Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Almanac (one volume) presents a comprehensive overview of the early history of the United States. The *Almanac* is divided into fifteen chapters. The first ten chapters chronologically address different timeframes during this early age in U.S. history. Featured subjects include the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution; the early battles between those who favored a strong

central government and those who favored strong state governments; foreign relations with Britain and France; the presidential administrations of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison; the War of 1812; and the dramatic Louisiana Purchase, which instantly more than doubled the United States. The final five chapters describe topics that are of importance throughout the period—farming, religion, women’s roles in everyday life, black slaves and Native Americans, and the westward expansion of the United States.

Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Primary Sources (one volume) tells the story of early America in the words of the people who lived and shaped it. Eighteen excerpted documents provide a wide range of perspectives on this period of history. Included are excerpts from presidential addresses; treaties with other nations and Native American tribes; national and state legislation; speeches by prominent early Americans; an everyday diary; and letters by individuals who lived through the eventful period.

A cumulative index of all three titles in the U•X•L *Shaping of America, 1783–1815 Reference Library* is also available.

Dedication

These volumes are dedicated to Hazel Hanes, who has a love of history.

Special thanks

Gratitude to Sue Van Leuven for assistance on literature research. Much appreciation also goes to copyeditor Jane Woychick, proofreader Amy Marcaccio Keyzer, indexer Theresa Murray, and typesetter Integra Software Services.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome your comments on *Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Biographies* and suggestions for other topics to consider. Please write: Editors, *Shaping of America, 1783–1815: Biographies*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535; call toll free: 1-800-877-4253; fax to (248) 699-8097; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.