

Six nights that will change the way you see America

A FAMILY VIEWING GUIDE TO
AMERICA
The Story of Us

A landmark series that captures the people and events that forged the American nation...



THE ADVENTURE BEGINS
SUNDAY APRIL 25 9/8c



HISTORY™ IS PROUD TO BRING *AMERICA THE STORY OF US* to the airwaves this April, telling the story of the connections and continuities that have shaped the course of U.S. history. Each hour-long episode moves through a vital chapter in the American past. We encourage you to view this series as a family, discuss its meaning, and connect the stories to your own local and family history – because this truly is the story of all of us.

Episode 1: Rise of the Patriots

The founding of Jamestown and Plymouth, the hardships of the early colonies, the arrival of Africans and the spread of slavery, interactions with Native Americans, and rising tensions with the British...

Key Events

- John Rolfe arrives in Jamestown in the spring of 1609 with something that will change the world – tobacco seeds.

★ **The Plymouth pilgrims have not come to America to make a profit. They have come to escape persecution and build a new society according to their religious principles.**



- In 1621, the Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Indians share an autumn harvest feast. Today, this gathering is remembered as the first Thanksgiving.
- Some 250,000 captives from west and central Africa are transported to America. Tragically, slavery based on race becomes one of the primary forms of labor in the colonies.
- Tensions develop between the colonists and the British government over rising taxes and lack of political representation.
- In early March, 1770, the event that came to be known as the Boston Massacre moves America one step closer to war with England.

★ **The Jamestown settlers hope to make their fortune plundering the abundant resources of America. But in Virginia, they've found none of the treasures they hoped for: no silk, no spices, no valuable medicinal plants – and no gold.**

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

On September 5, 1774, 56 delegates from 12 of the 13 colonies meet in Philadelphia to debate their response to British coercion. The birth of American democracy, this is the _____

(Answer on page 8)

Episode 2: Revolution

The sparks of rebellion, the Declaration of Independence, and the drama of the American Revolution. George Washington and his troops pave the way for a new nation...

Key Events

- Frontiersman Daniel Morgan and his Pennsylvania rifles help to turn the tide of the Revolution; guerilla warfare challenges British military tradition.
- The winter encampment at Valley Forge tests the strength and courage of Washington's troops.
- On October 14, 1781, after 6 years and some 30,000 American lives lost, the British surrender at Yorktown.

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

Robert Townsend was one of George Washington's most important espionage agents. One of the ways he protected the information he was passing on was by using _____.

(Answer on page 8)

Episode 3: Westward

The Westward migration; confrontations with Native Americans, the Spanish, and the French; the discovery of gold; and the battle to dominate the American landscape...



**In March
1775, Daniel**

**Boone, a hunter from
Pennsylvania, leads a
band of frontiersmen
through the
Appalachian forest
on a mission that
will change America
forever.**

Key Events

- In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase adds the former French and Spanish lands between the Mississippi and the Rockies to the young nation.
- Steamboats transform the Midwest, revolutionizing trade and settlement.
- The battle of the Alamo is avenged and, in May 1836, the Republic of Texas is born.
- President Jackson's Indian removal policy forces the Cherokee Nation to relinquish its lands east of the Mississippi and migrate to Oklahoma. Their devastating journey is known as the Trail of Tears.

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

_____ is the rallying cry for Texas independence.

(Answer on page 8)



Episode 4: Seeds of War

A revolution in commerce and industry, rising discord between the North and the South because of slavery, and the Civil War looms...

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

New York Governor DeWitt Clinton champions what becomes the most profitable venture in American history. It is the _____.

(Answer on page 8)

★ **In the South, the cotton boom carries a heavy burden...every 100 acres of the crop needs 10 to 20 slaves to plant and pick it.**

Key Events

- The American Industrial Revolution is born.
- In the 1840s and 1850s, Frederick Douglass becomes an important leader of the anti-slavery movement.
- America descends into Civil War in 1861; this conflict would become the costliest in U.S. history in terms of damage and lives lost.



Episode 5: Civil War

President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, former slaves join the Union army in droves, the Union prevails by 1865, and America is poised for unprecedented growth.

★ **"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"..."**

– *The Gettysburg Address, 1863*

Key Events

- The telegraph provides the Union forces with a commanding communications advantage.
- Robert E. Lee is defeated by General Meade's Army of the Potomac at the Battle of Gettysburg.
- Newspapers and the new technology of photography help sway public support for the Union forces.
- After the Civil War, slavery officially comes to an end throughout the U.S. and more than four million slaves are freed.

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

_____, a former slave and the founder and guiding force behind Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, becomes recognized as the nation's foremost black educator.

(Answer on page 8)

emancipation

Episode 6: Conquering the Plains

Railroads connect the coasts, land speculators and industrialists remake the country's vast Plains, and the West is transformed...

Key Events

- The Homestead Act of 1862 offers heads of households 160 acres of prairie land free, provided they build a house and stay for five years.
- The railroad brings hunters to the Plains. In just one year, 1873, they kill more than five million bison; with the destruction of bison herds, Native Americans in the West face starvation.
- On June 25, 1876, General George Custer and 210 of his cavalymen are killed by Cheyenne and Sioux warriors at Little Bighorn.
- In 1890, the American Census Bureau declares the frontier closed; all available settlement land is taken.

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

Nebraska farmer Joseph Gliddens becomes one of the richest men in America with his invention of _____, an inexpensive and easy way to fence the land.

(Answer on page 8)

★ **The railroad linking this vast nation is the greatest engineering project since the Great Wall of China.**

Episode 7: City

A new city of steel arises from the ashes of the 1871 Chicago fire, and new arrivals pass through the immigration center on Ellis Island...

Key Events

- Newspaperman Joseph Pulitzer launches a campaign to fund building the base for the Statue of Liberty.
- The photographs of Jacob Riis draw attention to the deplorable conditions in New York City slums.
- Thomas Edison perfects the electric light bulb.
- On March 25, 1911, 146 workers die in the Triangle Factory fire, the deadliest workplace disaster in New York history up to that date.

★ **Skyscrapers are the great American invention.**



Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

This Scottish immigrant organizes the company that launches the steel industry. His name is _____

(Answer on page 8)

Episode 8: Boom

World War I comes to an end in 1918, African Americans migrate north, and prohibition creates a thriving market for bootleg liquor...

Key Events

- The Hamill brothers transform the face of the Texas oilfields with their rotary drill.
- William Mulholland builds the 233-mile aqueduct that brings water from the eastern Sierras to Los Angeles.
- Henry Ford introduces the Model T in 1908.
- Tensions between African Americans and whites culminate in the Chicago race riot of 1919.

★ **The evangelical cries against the moral evils of alcohol are joined by calls from social improvers concerned about the plight of the poor.**

Episode 9: Bust

The stock market crashes, the Great Depression ensues, and Roosevelt introduces The New Deal...



Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

Rising 726 feet above the raging waters of the _____,

the dam that bears his name is called by Herbert Hoover “the greatest engineering work of its character ever attempted by the hand of man.” (Answer on page 8)

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

By 1917 America had become the largest producer of _____ in the world.

(Answer on page 8)

Key Events

- Civil engineer Frank Crowe leads the crew that builds the Hoover Dam.
- In 1927, driller Ernest “Bill” Reynolds begins sculpting the faces of four presidents onto South Dakota’s Mount Rushmore.
- By 1935, despite the Depression, there are more than 20 million radio sets in America.
- On June 22, 1938, 70 million people tune in to the radio broadcast of the historic rematch between boxers Joe Louis, the grandson of slaves, and German champion Max Schmeling.

★ **In 1932, 273,000 American families lose their homes through foreclosure.**

Shantytowns of the homeless are called “Hoovervilles,” ironically referencing President Herbert Hoover, who was blamed by many Americans for not doing enough to solve the problems unleashed by the Great Depression.

Episode 10: America at War

World War II reignites the engines of the U.S. economy and changes American society forever...

★ **With Pearl Harbor as a catalyst, the U.S. enters World War II in December of 1941. America must mobilize both men and machines.**



Key Events

- On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor leaves 2,403 dead, 188 destroyed planes, and a crippled Pacific Fleet that includes eight damaged or destroyed battleships.
- Boeing increases production of the B-17 bomber, known as the Flying Fortress.
- D-Day – June 6, 1944 – is the biggest single military operation the world has ever seen.
- On July 16, 1945, the first explosion of the atomic bomb ushers in the Atomic Age.

Family Challenge:

Do You Know?

Robert Oppenheimer was the scientific director for the _____, which developed the atomic bomb.

(Answer on page 8)

Episodes 11 & 12: Then and Now

In the final two episodes of this epic series, some of our nation's most prominent leaders and personalities reflect on the defining moments of post-World War II America – including the Cold War, the space race, the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, Watergate, and September 11. A fitting culmination is the swearing in of Barack Obama as the first African American president.



Then and Now provides a look at what has endured, and what has changed, during 400 years of American history. After watching this program, make your own list of the most important people and events in U.S. history. Who is on your list, and why?



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Answer Key to Family Challenge: Do You Know?

Episode 1: First Continental Congress, Episode 2: invisible ink, Episode 3: "Remember the Alamo!", Episode 4: Erie Canal, Episode 5: Booker T. Washington, Episode 6: barbed wire, Episode 7: Andrew Carnegie, Episode 8: oil, Episode 9: Colorado River, Episode 10: Manhattan Project