American history - from the earliest migration to the North American continent to the Civil War and Reconstruction.

All videos are closed captioned.

Lesson 1 - From Days Before Time
Early human habitation of the North American continent, The civilizations of the North and South and tribal cultures. The journeys of Christopher Columbus, Exploration and exploitation of the west by the Spanish; impact on native population, Early slave trade, Biological and cultural exchanges between the Spanish and native cultures.

Lesson 2 - Turbulent Virginia: Pirate Base…Royal Colony
Incentives for English colonization. French and Dutch presence in North America. British attempts to establish a base at Roanoke and the outcome. Subsequent Virginia Company settlement at Jamestown. The people who come; the struggle to survive; the response of Native Americans. Establishing the royal colony in 1619.

Lesson 3 - Saints and Strangers
Discontent of Puritan Separatists; their journey to Plymouth. The Mayflower Compact; life once off the ship. Experience with Irish influences attitude toward Native Americans. Massachusetts Bay Company as structure for a colony. Creating a godly community; the role of the town meeting and church. Expansion and growth brings colonists into conflict with Native Americans.

Lesson 4 - The Lure of Land
English interest in colonization hindered by Civil War and rise of Oliver Cromwell; resumes under Charles II. Expanded list of immigrants find home in middle colonies. Agricultural interests take hold in Carolinas and Georgia. James II attempts to exert greater control over colonies, parliament, and European neighbors; overthrown in Glorious Revolution. Colonies exerting more independence, becoming more diverse.

Lesson 5 - Coming to America: Portrait of Colonial Life
Immigration key to American history. Contrasting experiences of different groups. The challenges of indentured servitude; their contributions. Family groups in New England; roles within the family unit. The emergence of a slave society in North America. Upsurge in Scotch Irish and German immigration.

Lesson 6 - Divergent Paths
Contrast between large scale agricultural operations in South vs. small family farms and commercial operations in North. Emergence of cities; absence of rigid class differences of Europe. Distinctly American form of communities: the plantation society of the South, the tightly knit New England towns governed by town covenants. Witch trials in Salem. The Great Awakening.

Lesson 7 - Strained Relations
Lesson 8 - Not Much of a War

Lesson 9 - A Precarious Experiment
Peace Treaty (1783) with Great Britain negotiated by Richard Oswald, John Jay, and Benjamin Franklin. Uncertainties facing young country. Effects of war on new nation’s people, politics, and economy. Difficulty of functioning as “nation” under Articles of Confederation. Partial resolution of controversies related to western lands, but not problem of mounting national debt. Annapolis Convention to modify Articles of Confederation fails to attract enough delegates.

Lesson 10 - Vision for a Nation

Lesson 11 - Rivals and Friends

Lesson 12 - Best Laid Plans…
Republican desire to minimize national government and encourage small town/ agrarian lifestyles overtaken during Jefferson’s presidency by economic vitality and growth of cities, beginnings of industrialization, the Louisiana Purchase, expansion to the west. Jefferson’s embargo in response to Napoleonic Wars hurts economy of northeast. Election of James Madison in 1808; Jefferson lifts embargo as he leaves office. The War of 1812.

Lesson 13 - Pressure From Within

Lesson 14 - He Brought The People With Him
Lesson 15 - Legacy of an Autocratic Ruler
President's Jackson's policy related to Native Americans. The Veil of Tears. Henry Clay’s introduction of bill to renew charter of Bank of United States as ploy prior to presidential election of 1832. Jackson’s veto of bill and reelection victory. Jackson's attempts to deplete power of bank after election. Van Buren, Jackson's successor, and economic crises. Political battles between the Whigs and Democrats; Harrison’s election in 1840 and his brief term in office; John Tyler, his successor.

Lesson 16 - Revolution of a Different Sort
Growth in population and surge in transportation and technology which occurs during the first half of the 18th century. Rising immigration, and incidence of nativism. Growth of canal system, emergence of railroads, and its priming of news industry. Industrialists, the emerging factory system, and its effect on workers and artisans.

Lesson 17 - Worlds Apart
Changes in social order in first half of the nineteenth century. The wealthy class as an derivative of industrial success; contrast with the very poor. Emergence of the middle class. Concept of a leisure wife and the cult of domesticity. Portrait of life on the farm in the North in comparison with life on the Southern plantation.

Lesson 18 - Master and Slave
Southern life and the differences in class and culture that arose. Plantations not all pillared mansions with hundreds of slaves. Life of poor white families. The slave family in agricultural and city settings. The contrast in living conditions; the harshness of slave laws. The rich culture built by slaves: religion, family, music and art.

Lesson 19 - Voices of Reform
Emergence of romanticism in literature and art. The transcendentalists and Utopian societies. Reform movements that emerged from the Second Great Awakening. A closer look at the temperance movement, the abolitionists movement, and women’s suffrage efforts: their leaders and effects on each other.

Lesson 20 - Manifest Destiny?
American expansion into the west. Tensions between Mexico and the United States over Texas. The Mexican War and its aftermath. Discovery of gold in California in 1848, and the rush for riches. How the gold rush changed lives of the Californians and Native Americans, the Chinese workers and those lured by the luster of gold.

Lesson 21 - Decade of Discord
Sectional tensions over slavery subside with the Compromise of 1850; resurface as western states seek territorial and then state status. Railroad expansion plans ignite bloodshed in Kansas and Missouri. Parties sectionalized; Whigs disappear, Republicans emerge. Lincoln-Douglas debates foreshadow future Harper’s Ferry Raid convinces South they’ll never be safe in the Union. Election of 1860 divides country; Abraham Lincoln wins ballot.

Lesson 22 - House Divided
Election of Abraham Lincoln spawns secession of seven states led by South Carolina. Confederate States form provisional government before Lincoln is inaugurated, take over two southern forts. Neither side believes there will be war, but attack on Fort Sumter by Confederate forces signals beginning of conflict. Both sides mobilize quickly. Union has material advantage; Confederates win early battles. Lincoln and Union generals want to minimize damage to South so they can come back into Union. Influence of border states. Confiscation Acts address problem of captured and runaway slaves. War becomes harder with no end in sight.
Lesson 23 - Battle Cry
South needs support of England and France to win war; North needs to maintain status quo. North needs to win militarily; South needs to avoid defeat. Most of American West removed from fighting. Lee appointed commander of Army of Virginia; takes war into Northern territory. Union forces have parade of generals. Battles extremely costly to both sides; Lincoln uses near victory at Antietam to issue Emancipation Proclamation. Both sides resort to draft.

Lesson 24 - Final Stages
1863 pivotal year in determining outcome of war. Decisive battles at Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga. Ulysses S. Grant named Commander of Western Theater for Union after victory at Vicksburg. Material superiority of North begins to make a difference. South devastated by Sherman’s march through Georgia. Grant and Meade pursue Lee in Virginia in 1864. Vastly outnumbered, Lee holds on behind fortifications at Petersburg; finally surrenders to Lee at Appomattox in April of 1865. In military terms, long war is over.

Lesson 25 - What Price Freedom
Reconstruction plans discussed long before war’s end, with little agreement. Lincoln’s assassination brings Johnson into office. New president grants amnesty to thousands of former Confederates: plantation owners, politicians, generals. Angers Radical Republicans in Congress. Mid-year Republican victories give party clout to override Johnson’s vetoes of their proactive Reconstruction efforts. Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to Constitution passed. Johnson impeached and just misses conviction in Senate. Grant elected his successor.

Lesson 26 - Tattered Remains
White Southerners consider Reconstruction vicious and destructive; former slaves see it as small step toward gaining economic and political power. Improvements occur in Southern public education; blacks rebuild family structures. Sharecropping initiated to get the land into production without cash outlay; abuses of system. Hayes elected president and withdraws last of troops. Violence used to subvert voting privileges of black citizens. Legal barriers enacted, supported by Supreme Court, diminish the rights blacks had gained.