

0. WHAT A COUNTRY! - Story Preface
1. FDR: YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR!
2. ENGLAND: WE'VE HAD IT!
3. SURE YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT?
4. WE DON'T APPROVE!
5. THE PRICE WE PAY

6. WHAT A COUNTRY!



This illustration, from an 1885 American high-school textbook entitled "History of the US," depicts a flag (in the upper-right-hand corner) which was popular during the American Revolution. The words, "Don't Tread on Me," expressed the Colonials' frustration with the British government. Made popular in 1775, the rattlesnake-featured flag was referred to as the "Gadsden Flag," in honor of the American general (Christopher Gadsden) who designed it. Image online via Wikimedia Commons. Click on it for a better view.

Americans have always had spirited debates over what laws should be passed. Even at the beginning, people argued about what form of government the colonies should have.

Benjamin Franklin published the first political cartoon on May 9, 1754 in his *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The picture, a snake cut up in pieces, accompanied Franklin's commentary on the "present disunited state of the British colonies." It's caption:

Join, or Die.

Even when the "federal" form of government was generally approved, individual states had to decide whether they wanted "national" laws instead of "state" laws - AND - if there were national (federal) laws, how those laws would impact state's rights. The January 30, 1788 issue of the *Massachusetts Centinel* (published in Boston) makes clear that Massachusetts was not the first to vote for a "federal superstructure."

Americans continue to disagree about law and politics. Sometimes endless arguments seem petty or incapable of resolution. But when attacked, Americans close ranks, supporting each other and their institutions.

Frank Spangler, in a cartoon entitled Bringing in the Sheep, effectively made the point. He had "Uncle Sam" ironically expressing "Thanks!" to the Japanese for helping to unite a country deeply divided over World War II involvement.

Every November Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day, a tradition loosely associated with the Pilgrims. On October 14, 1789, the *Massachusetts Centinel* published President George Washington's first Thanksgiving Day Proclamation. If we could loosely translate those words, now hundreds of years old, into common parlance, they might sound something like this:

What a country we've been blessed to have!

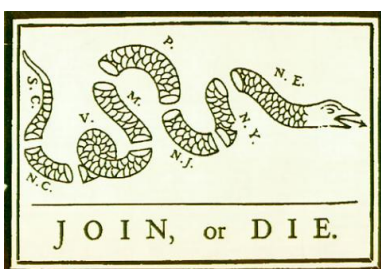
See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHAT-A-COUNTRY-People-Rule)

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Media Stream



First Political Cartoon - by Benjamin Franklin

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