

The Alien and Sedition Acts and the Naturalization Act

These were a series of Acts that divided political opinions within the nation during the Presidency of John Adams (1797-1801)

The **Naturalization Act** (1798) - It made it harder for an immigrant to become a citizen. The Act extended the residency requirement from 5 to 14 years.

The **Alien Friends Act** (1798) - It allowed the President to imprison and deport non-citizens who were deemed dangerous.

The **Alien Enemy Act** (1798) – It allowed the President to imprison or deport non-citizens who were deemed dangerous who came from a hostile nation.

The **Sedition Act** of 1798 – It allowed the President to imprison or deport or make anyone a criminal if a U.S. Citizen, if they were openly critical of the United States government.

Federalists said these Acts were necessary for National Security due to the issues with France during the Napoleonic Wars that they were stealing American cargo ships and sailors. [The Quasi-War].

Anti-Federalists and other critics said these Acts were attempts to suppress voters who disagreed with the Federalist policies and the Acts were against the First Amendment Rights of Freedom of Speech.

In response came the **Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions**.

They were secretly written by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

These two states passed laws that stated the Alien and Sedition Acts were unconstitutional.

No aliens were deported, but there were 25 prosecutions, resulting in 10 convictions, under the Sedition Act. With the war threat passing and the Republicans winning control of the federal government in 1800, all the Alien and Sedition Acts expired or were repealed during the next two years, except for the Alien Enemies Act, which remained in effect and was amended in 1918 to include women.