

4 Multimedia Features

Among the most fascinating features of **American History Explorer** are those that take advantage of the multimedia capabilities of modern technology. For example, you can listen to 110 narrated slide shows or songs from early America. You can view six videos on your computer monitor or try an old-fashioned method of "getting into a picture"-- 3D images. This feature uses the stereo viewer glasses included in your program package to imitate the stereo viewers used by your ancestors.

This chapter includes instructions on operating all these multimedia features and others that offer special ways to research, enjoy, and test yourself on information about early America. You'll find descriptions on using the Song Book, Slide Shows, Movie Theater, and Hall of Presidents; plus the Time Trek, Finder, Picture Album, 3D Gallery, and 5Ws Game. Details on these options are also included in the online Help.

Adjusting Program Volume

American History Explorer has no separate volume controls for monitoring the sound on slide shows, movies, songs, and the Hall of Presidents. To adjust the volume, you'll need to use your system controls.

First, check any external controls. For example, some systems have volume control knobs on the speakers. If there is no volume control on your speaker, check the guide provided with your sound system. Often there is a sound "mixer" panel that allows you to adjust the volume for all applications.

Playing the Song Book

The Song Book, available from the Opening Screen, plays music related to the Colonial and Civil War eras of American history.

To listen to a tune,

1. Click on the Song Book icon on the Opening Screen to open a list of available songs.
2. Click on your choice and the program will begin playing the selected song.

You can continue to work with the program while a song is being played. Just click the curl on the corner of the screen to exit the feature, then go to another feature while the song continues to play.

About the Musicians

To learn more about the early Americans who wrote the songs and the modern musicians performing them, you can click on the About Musicians button to instantly access Help topics about the songs.

Adjusting Volume and Stopping a Song

To adjust the volume, see *Adjusting Program Volume* at the beginning of this chapter. To stop a song before it is finished playing, click the Stop button on the bottom left side of the screen.

Viewing Slide Shows

The program's 110 narrated slide shows can be accessed from the Slide Shows icon on the Opening Screen.

To select a slide show,

1. Click on the Slide Shows icon on the Opening Screen. The Select Slide Show dialog box appears.

2. Find the slide show you wish to view (use the scroll bar, if necessary, or type the first few letters of the title in the field above the list). When the slide show is highlighted, click on it or press **Enter**. The selected slide show will open and the narration will begin automatically.

NOTE: You can also access a slide show about an open map or about any president you select in the Hall of Presidents (covered later in this chapter). In these two cases, the program will automatically select the appropriate slide show when you click the Slide Show icon on the icon bar of a Map window or click the View a Slide Show button in the Hall of Presidents (see page 4-3).

Using the Slide Show Control Bar

At the bottom of every slide show screen is a four-button control bar which you can use to rewind, stop, start, and fast forward the slide show. Click on the appropriate button to perform the desired operation.

Adjusting Volume and Exiting a Slide Show

To adjust the volume, see *Adjusting Program Volume* at the beginning of this chapter. To exit a slide show at any time, double-click the Control-menu box in the top left corner of the slide show window.

Viewing Movie Theater Videos

The six videos can be accessed from the Movie Theater icon on the Opening Screen or from the time lines.

To start a video from the Movie Theater,

1. Click on the Movie Theater icon on the Opening Screen. The six title screens are displayed.
2. Click on the video you wish to view. (Titles displayed below each screen will help you choose a video.) The program will begin the video.

To start a video from a time line,

- * Click any video icon displayed at the top of the time line screen. The program will begin the video.

Adjusting Volume and Exiting a Video

To adjust the volume of a video, see *Adjusting Program Volume* at the beginning of this chapter. You can exit a video at any time by clicking the curl at the bottom right corner of the Movie Theater window.

Using the Hall of Presidents

The Hall of Presidents feature provides details on the lives of America's first presidents. You can read their inaugural addresses, view pictures of them, and learn about their lives.

To open the Hall of Presidents and learn more about the presidents,

1. Click on the Hall of Presidents icon on the Opening Screen. A gallery of presidential portraits appears.
2. Click the portrait of any president. An introduction of the president is announced.

From here you can scroll to hear introductions of the other presidents (see *Scrolling Through the Gallery*) or go on to detail about the selected president (see *Studying a President in Depth*).

Scrolling Through the Gallery

To hear about other presidents, move the pointer cursor to either side of the screen. The pointer will turn into a solid arrow cursor and you can bump the edge of the screen to scroll right or left. When the next president's portrait is centered on the screen, the program introduces him. At any time you can click on a president's portrait to access more details about him, or click on the sheveled book icon to return to the gallery of presidential portraits.

Studying a President in Depth

To access more information about the president displayed in the gallery, click on the president's name plate or portrait. The next screen offers you the following four options:

Learn about the Election. Click this option to open a map that displays the results of the applicable presidential election. From the map you can access the Overview article to read more about the election, the People article to read about others who played significant roles in the election, and the Document article to read the selected president's inaugural address.

Read about the Man. Click this option to read a three-part summary of information about the selected president. The article includes sections on **His Profile** (lists of the president's family, background, physical characteristics, occupation, last words, etc.) **His Milestones** (lists of military and government achievements), and **His Story** (detailed history of his life and accomplishments).

View a Slide Show. Click this option to view and listen to a slide show about the president.

Compare Presidents. Click this option to compare the selected president with other presidents of early America. For details on using this feature, see the section on *Comparing Presidents* which follows.

Comparing Presidents

Comparing Presidents is a feature of the Hall of Presidents that allows you to view side-by-side the details of the country's first 18 presidents and Jefferson Davis (President of the Confederacy during the Civil War).

To open the presidential comparison,

1. Open the Hall of Presidents and click on the portrait of any president. A brief description of the president is read for you.
2. Click on the president's nameplate to access more options.
3. Click the Compare Presidents icon. A table is displayed on screen.

To use the comparison table, scroll across the table to read a row of details about a particular president, or compare him to other presidents by column. (See the following section, *Tips on Scrolling*, for instruction on moving left and right through the chart.)

At any time you can access the details about a single president. To do so, move your cursor to the list of presidents on the left side of the screen. When the pointer cursor changes to a hand cursor, click on a

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president's name. You'll be returned to the president's portrait, which you can click for more information.

To close the comparison grid,

1. Click on the curled page at the bottom of the list of presidents. This returns you to the previous screen.
2. Continue clicking on curled pages until you reach the screen you want.

Tips on Scrolling

When using the Compare Presidents feature, you move backward (to the left side of the screen) by clicking on the right side of the first, fixed column (of presidents' names), rather than the left edge of the screen. See page 1-4 for details on scrolling without a scroll bar.

Adjusting Volume and Exiting the Hall of Presidents

To adjust the volume, see *Adjusting Program Volume* at the beginning of this chapter.

At any time you can exit the Hall of Presidents by clicking the curls at the corner of the screens until you return to the screen you want. If you're in the Compare Presidents segment, the curl is located at the bottom of the presidents' names -- the first column on the left.

Taking a Time Trek

The time lines included in American History Explorer are more than illustrations. Each one can be used as a chronological "port of entry" into the program's database. Articles accessible through each marked year on the time line serve as a beginning point for study. The articles, maps, presidential profiles, and documents that branch off the main line help put people and events into perspective. The videos that accompany each time line bring a segment of history to life.

To open a time line,

1. Click the Time Trek icon on the Opening Screen. A row of blocks, depicting different time periods is presented on screen.
2. Select a time line by clicking on the title or its associated icon of the period that you wish to view. The program presents the time line on screen.

Accessing Articles, Maps, Documents, Presidential Profiles

As you move your cursor along the main time line (or its branches), the cursor will change to a hand cursor when it is over a "hot spot" such as a map icon or an article icon. Click on the hot spot to access the feature. This is the method you'll use to open the features - articles, maps, documents, presidential profiles - available from the main time line.

For more information on moving through a time line, see *Tips on Scrolling*, earlier in this chapter.

Accessing Year Articles

The main line that runs through the middle of a time line screen is marked with the years covered by that time period. Each of these dates (1775, for example) functions like an article icon. Just click on the year to open a Year article. A Year article lists all the articles pertaining to event that occurred during the selected year and functions like a linked article. You can click any listed article to open it instantly.

Adjusting Volume and Exiting a Time Line

To adjust the volume, see *Adjusting Program Volume* at the beginning of this chapter. You can exit a time line at any time; just click the curl at the top right corner of the screen and return to the Opening Screen.

Operating the Finder

To enhance your study efforts, you can use the Finder feature to search for features that contain information on your selected subject. For example, if you want to know about Daniel Boone, you can quickly locate information --from an article, picture, map, video, or slide show, whichever format suits your needs.

To open the Finder and locate information,

1. Click the Finder icon on the Opening Screen to open a Search dialog box.
2. In the Query field at the top of the dialog, enter a word, partial word, or phrase such as the name of the person, place, or event that you want to research.
3. Select other options as outlined below to refine your search.

Categories

In the Categories box, mark the categories for your search. (For example, if you only want a map, just mark that option.) Categories can be marked and unmarked by clicking on the category name.

Search Limits

In the Search Limits box, indicate whether you want the program to search for your word or phrase only in titles, or throughout all the text included in the program. (This includes text in a slide show or video.)

To further refine the search, you can check the option to do a Title Search by First Word only. For example, if you enter the word Thomas and mark the First Word option, the Finder will locate the article on Thomas, George, a Union general during the Civil War. However, if you leave the First Word option blank, the program will have to search through all the words in all the titles, and may come up with more articles containing the word Thomas in the title, such as Edison, Thomas, as well as the article on Thomas, George.

Match

In the Match box, mark whether you want the program to search for Full Words or Partial Words. This is handy if you're not sure of the spelling of a term or name. For example, entering John in the Query field and selecting Partial Words will locate all references to John, Johnny, Johnson, Johnston, and Johnstone. Had you selected Full Words, the program would only locate references to John.

4. When you're satisfied with the settings, click the Find button. The program will search through all the categories you've selected and present a Search Results box with its findings.
5. Select any item in the Search Results box and click View to instantly access the information.

Viewing Pictures

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Any of the more than 1,000 pictures in **American History Explorer** can be accessed from the Opening Screen. In addition, many of the pictures in **American History Explorer** are used to illustrate articles and can be accessed directly from an article with Picture links.

To view a picture from the Opening Screen,

1. Click on the Picture Album icon on the Opening Screen. A Select Picture dialog box will open.
2. Select the picture you want to view and double-click on it to see it displayed on screen.
3. When you're finished, double-click the Control-menu box or press **Esc** on the keyboard to close the picture and return to the Opening Screen.

To view a picture from an open article,

1. Click on the picture icon. The picture opens immediately in its own window.
2. When you're done viewing the picture, double-click the Control-menu box (or press **Esc** on the keyboard) to close the picture and return to the Article window.

Viewing 3D Images

American History Explorer includes a gallery of 3D images. These double or "stereo" images are similar to those used by early Americans decades ago. The double illustrations were printed on cards and clipped to a "stereo" viewer so a person could see a three-dimensional image. The effect is almost like being there!

To access these images,

1. Click on the 3D Gallery icon on the Opening Screen.
2. Select the picture you want to view and double-click on it to see it displayed on screen.

Once you have a 3D image displayed on screen, there are two ways you can view it: using the special glasses included in the **American History Explorer** package, or simply "free viewing."

Viewing 3D Images with Glasses

The stereo images in the 3D Gallery will come alive with the viewing glasses (viewer) provided with **American History Explorer**. Tips for positioning the stereo viewer are offered below, followed by instructions for viewing the images.

Tips for Positioning the Stereo Viewer

- * Place the viewer on the bridge of your nose.
- * If you wear eyeglasses, hold the viewer in front of your glasses.
- * Experiment with the viewer to find your comfort level.
- * Tilt the viewer back and forth or rock it up and down slightly as you're viewing the stereo images.

Viewing Stereo Images

Once you've selected the 3D image you want to view and positioned the viewer, follow the steps below.

1. Position yourself so the stereo image on your monitor is centered in front of your nose.
2. Moving your face toward the monitor, close one eye and move your head forward and backward to find your best focal point.
3. Open both eyes and the stereo image should merge.

If you aren't able to see a fused image, try moving the viewer back and forth on your nose, tilt it back and forth or rock it up and down slightly until the fusion is accomplished.

Free Viewing 3D Images

In addition to viewing the 3D Images with a viewer, you can also "free view" the images without the viewer. Free viewing is a learned skill -- you teach your brain to see what you want it to see. Before attempting this with the computer images, follow the steps below for a practice session.

1. Look at the illustration in your *Information Guide* to determine a normal comfortable reading distance. (Because of differing visions, this distance will vary with everyone). Remember that distance.
2. Looking out a window, stare at an object (tree or house) about 100 yards away. Relax. Pay attention to how your eyes feel as they are staring at the object.
3. With your eyes fixed on the object, slowly bring the illustration into your field of vision at your correct reading distance, with your nose aligned with the center of the image. You should be viewing the image as though you were looking *through* the page, not *at* the page. The image will be out of focus, but concentrate on relaxing your eyes.
4. Draw your attention to the two dots at the top of the illustration. If you're still on track, you will actually see three dots. Concentrate on the middle dot with your mind not your eyes! You will see the right and left dot in your peripheral vision, but focus (not with your eyes) on the center dot.
5. Now, shift your attention to the alphabet letters without losing your focus.

You may not be successful on the first try, but don't give up. Practice again. Soon you'll be able to eliminate steps 1 and 2 and view any stereo image. When you apply this method to viewing stereo on your monitor, the viewing distance will be greater than with your viewer glasses.

Playing the 5Ws Game

The 5Ws Game is a quick way to test your knowledge of information included in the **American History Explorer**. To play the game, first make your selections from the following options, then begin. The program will keep your score according to the outlined point system.

Game Selections

Each time you begin the 5Ws Game, choose your settings from the choices below:

- * Select play for one or two players

- * Select game length:
 - 5 questions - each player receives five questions
 - 10 questions - each player receives 10 questions
 - Ask until player quits - game ends when player selects Quit

Scoring Points

- * Players receive 100 points for selecting a correct answer on the first try, 75 points on the second try, and so on.
- * For each hint given, 10 points are deducted from the potential 100 points.

NOTE: If you research the question before asking for a hint, no points are deducted.

Playing the Game

To play the 5Ws Game,

1. Click Begin. Player 1 is asked the first multiple choice question. Questions are randomly selected from a database of over 400 questions.
2. Player 1 can choose an answer, ask for a hint, or pass. By passing, the player gives up the chance to receive any points on that question.

USING HINTS: If a player selects an incorrect answer, hints are automatically provided. Clicking on any of the icons to the left of a hint will bring up the map, article, or slide show that the player can research for the answer. Once the player is finished researching, he or she can return to the game to choose another answer. Previously selected answers and hints are dimmed to track the player's choices.

3. After Player 1 selects the correct answer or passes, Player 2 takes a turn (assuming the game is in "Two Player" mode). The red ball indicates whose turn it is.
4. The game ends when five or ten questions have been asked or when the player(s) decide to quit.
5. The final score is presented and the winner acknowledged.