

## The “Era of Good Feelings”: 1816-1824

- I. U.S. emerged from the War of 1812 with a heightened sense of nationalism
- A. Madison more popular when leaving office in 1817 than in 1809
  - B. Causes
    1. Victories in War of 1812, especially Battle of New Orleans
      - U.S. now capable of defending itself against a world power.
    2. Death of Federalist party: temporarily reduced sectionalism & states' rights sentiment
    3. Decline of economic and political dependence on Europe
    4. Westward expansion and optimism about the future
  - C. Americans began to see themselves as Americans first and state citizens second.
- II. **Henry Clay's American System: BUS, tariffs, internal improvements**
- A. **Second National Bank (BUS)** voted by Congress in 1816.
    1. Lack of national bank during the War of 1812 hurt the economy.
      - a. Local banks sprung up all over the country
      - b. Country flooded by depreciated bank notes that hurt the war effort.
    2. Modeled after first National Bank but with 3.5 times more capital.
    3. Jeffersonians supported the new BUS.
      - a. Used same arguments that Hamilton had used in 1791.
      - b. Ironically, Federalists denounced it as unconstitutional.
  - B. **Tariff of 1816**
    1. Purpose: protection of U.S. manufacturing from British competition.
      - a. After the war, Britain flooded U.S. with cheap goods, often below cost to undercut new U.S. industries.
        - Americans saw this as British attempt to crush U.S. factories.
      - b. First protective tariff in U.S. History
        - i. Imposed roughly 20-25% duties on imports
        - ii. Not really high enough to provide effective protection.
      - c. Started a protective trend in U.S. trade.
    2. Sectional battle over the tariff represented by the three great Congressional leaders of the era: Calhoun, Webster, and Clay (the "Great Triumvirate")
      - a. John C. Calhoun (from South Carolina) represented southern views.
        - i. Recent war hawk and strong nationalist.
        - ii. After initially supporting 1816 tariff, he opposed it claiming it enriched New England manufacturers at South's expense

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- b. Daniel Webster (from New Hampshire) represented northern views.
  - i. Opposed the 1816 tariff.
  - ii. Shippers in NH feared tariff would damage their industry.
  - iii. New England not completely industrial yet.
- 3. Clay saw tariffs as a way to develop a strong domestic market.
  - a. Eastern trade would flourish under tariff protection.
  - b. Tariff revenues would fund roads & canals in the West, especially the Ohio Valley
    - Frontier settlers criticized the horrible road system.
  - c. Foodstuffs & raw materials from the South and West would flow into the North and East

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**C. Internal Improvements (failed to pass)**

- 1. Congress passed Calhoun's Bonus Bill in 1817; would have given funds to states for internal improvements.
  - a. Madison vetoed it claiming it was unconstitutional
  - b. His successor, James Monroe, also vetoed the legislation.
  - c. Jeffersonians opposed direct federal support of intrastate internal improvements; saw it as a states' rights issue
  - d. New England opposed federally built roads & canals; feared it would drain away population and create competing states in the West.
- 2. Prior to Civil War, most internal improvements (except railroads) were done at the expense of state and local governments.
  - The Erie Canal in New York (1826) is a good example

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**Memory Aid for Henry Clay's American System: "BIT"**

**Bank of the U.S. (BUS)  
Internal Improvements  
Tariff of 1816**

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**III. Era of Good Feelings (1817-1825)**

- A. James Monroe elected President in 1816
  - 1. Continued Virginia dynasty (4 of first 5 U.S. presidents were Virginian; 32 of first 36 yrs)
  - 2. Death of Federalist party resulted after the election.
    - a. Federalist liabilities
      - i. "Disloyalty" during the War of 1812
      - ii. Extremely sectional regarding the interests of New England
      - iii. Jefferson had adopted many of their most important ideas (e.g. Hamilton's financial plan, expansion, loose construction in certain cases)

- b. Ironically, Federalists reversed many of their initial positions
  - i. Originally nationalistic; now opposed to Republican nationalism
  - ii. Became strict constructionists especially regarding internal improvements
- 3. "Era of Good Feelings": a term coined by a newspaper writer following Monroe on his 1817 inspection tour of military bases

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B. "Era of Good Feelings" somewhat of a misnomer; serious issues divided the nation.

- 1. Emerging sectionalism (east, west and south)
- 2. Tariff issue (east and south opposed; west in favor)
- 3. Internal improvements (east and south opposed; west in favor)
- 4. BUS: west and south opposed; eastern bankers in favor
- 5. Sale of public lands (east opposed; west and south in favor)
- 6. Panic of 1819 caused western hostility toward eastern bankers.
- 7. Issue of slavery in Missouri created increased sectionalism (north vs. south); resolved by Missouri Compromise of 1820
- 8. Republican party enjoying 1-party rule began developing factions
  - eventually leading to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Party System in the 1830s.
  - Clay, Calhoun, Jackson, John Quincy Adams

C. Monroe's presidency oversaw two major events:

- 1. Panic of 1819
- 2. Missouri Compromise of 1820

#### IV. **Panic of 1819**

- A. Economic panic and depression hit in 1819
  - 1. First financial panic since the "Critical Period" of the 1780s under Articles of Confederation.
  - 2. Henceforth, panics and depressions would occur about every 20 years: 1837, 1857, 1873, 1893, 1907, 1929
- B. Causes of 1819 panic:
  - 1. Immediate cause: Overspeculation on frontier lands by banks (especially BUS)
  - 2. Inflation from 1812 war + economic drop-off after war (especially cotton) = vulnerable economy
  - 3. Significant deficit in balance of trade with Britain meant U.S. drained of vital specie (gold and silver coin)
  - 4. BUS forced "wildcat" western banks to foreclose on western farms
    - a. BUS stopped allowing payment in paper; now demanded payment in specie
    - b. State banks affected & called in loans in specie

c. Many farmers didn't have specie so they lost their farms.

C. Resulted in calls for reform and pressure for increased democracy.

1. Western farmers viewed the bank as an evil financial monster.
2. Hard hit poor classes looking for more responsive gov't (beginnings of "Jacksonian democracy")
3. New land legislation resulted in smaller parcels being sold for lower prices.
  - By the Civil War, western land given away nearly for free.
4. Widespread sentiment to end horrible practice of imprisoning debtors.
  - Some states passed legislation reducing debtor prisons.

D. Monroe reelected in 1820 with nearly unanimous electoral vote

1. Only president in history to be elected after a major panic.
2. Demonstrates "Era of Good Feelings"

V. The Growing West

A. New states' characteristics

1. Were not focused states' rights issues (like the South and East)
2. Depended heavily on federal gov't where it had received most of its land.
3. Contained a wide diversity of peoples immigrating from the east.

B. 9 new western states joined the union between 1791 & 1819

1. Most had been admitted alternately free and slave.
2. Maintaining a sectional balance in Congress was a supreme goal.

C. Reasons for westward expansion

1. Westward movement had been significant since colonial era.
2. Cheap lands in Ohio territory attracted thousands of European immigrants.
3. Land exhaustion in older tobacco states drove people westward.
4. Speculators accepted small down payments & made purchase of land easier.
5. Economic depression during the embargo years sparked migration westward.
6. Defeat of Amerindians in previous decades cleared away much of the frontier.
  - a. Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794)
  - b. Battle of Tippecanoe (1811)
7. Transportation Revolution improved land routes to Ohio Valley.
  - a. Cumberland Road begun in 1811; from Maryland to Illinois.
  - b. Advent of steamboat in 1811 made upstream travel possible.

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- c. Canals beginning in 1826 allowed for increased trade between west and east.
- D. West still remained weak in population and influence
  - 1. Allied with other sections regarding national political issues.
  - 2. Demanded land reform & cheap transportation, cheap money, created its own "wildcat" banks, & fought the BUS.

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## VI. Missouri Compromise of 1820

- A. Missouri asked Congress to enter the union in 1819
  - 1. **Tallmadge Amendment** thus passed House of Representatives
    - a. No more slaves could be brought into Missouri
    - b. Gradual emancipation of children born to slave parents already there.
- B. Southerners viewed Tallmadge Amendment as huge threat to sectional balance.
  - 1. Jefferson: The crisis rang like "a firebell in the night."
  - 2. Concerned by fast increase in northern population and economy, and political balance in the House of Representatives.
    - Senate still balanced 11 free to 11 slave states
  - 3. Future of the slave system intensely concerned southerners
    - a. Missouri first state entirely west of Mississippi made from Louisiana Territory.
    - b. Tallmadge Amendment might set a precedent for rest of the region to be free.
    - c. If Congress could abolish slavery in Missouri, it might try in southern states.
    - d. Small group of abolitionists in the North protested
  - 4. Senate refused to pass the amendment; national crisis loomed
- C. **Missouri Compromise of 1820**
  - 1. Henry Clay led the mediation of a compromise
  - 2. Provisions:
    - a. Congress agreed to admit Missouri as a slave state.
    - b. Maine was admitted as a free state.
      - Balance kept at 12 to 12 for the next 15 years.
    - c. Future slavery prohibited north of 36° 30' line, the southern border of Missouri.
      - Ironically, Missouri was north of the 36-30 line.
  - 3. Compromise was largely accepted by both sides
    - a. South got Missouri
    - b. North won concession that it could forbid slavery in the remaining territories above the 36° 30' line
      - i. North had an advantage as Spanish territory in southwest prevented significant southern expansion westward.
      - ii. Southerners not too concerned about lands north of 36° 30'

as climate not conducive to cash crop agriculture requiring slave labor.

D. Legacy of the Compromise

1. Lasted 34 years and preserved the union (until Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854)
2. Henceforth, slavery became a dominant issue in American politics.
  - Serious setback to national unity
3. South began to develop a sectional nationalism of its own.
  - Looked to the western states who were seeking allies as well.
4. Clay later criticized unfairly by Northerners as an "appeaser"

VII. **John Marshall** and Judicial Nationalism

A. Marshall most important chief justice in U.S. history (1801-1835)

1. Significantly strengthened the Supreme Court in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) and other cases.
2. His decisions greatly increased power of the federal government over the states.
  - a. Strengthened the federal gov't and helped create a stable, nationally uniform environment for business.
  - b. Checked excesses of the popularly elected state legislatures
  - c. Yet, his decisions at times hampered democracy at a time when America was becoming much more democratic during the Jacksonian era.
3. Examined cases from a Federalist philosophy and found legal precedents to support his Hamiltonian views.
  - a. Jeffersonian attempts to balance the Court with Republicans failed.
  - b. Republicans came to accept the Federalist ideal of strong central gov't.

B. *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810) (protection of property rights against popular pressures)

1. Issue: new Georgia legislature canceled a contract which granted 35 million acres in the Yazoo River country (Miss.) to land speculators as a form of graft.
  - Previous legislature had made the grant in what was called "Yazoo Land Controversy" during Jefferson's presidency.
2. Significance: Court ruled Constitution forbids state from "impairing contracts".
  - a. One of earliest examples of Court asserting its right to invalidate state laws.
  - b. Court stated the legislative grant was a contract (albeit fraudulently secured)

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C. ***Martin v. Hunter's Lessee*** (1816)

1. Issue: Did Supreme Court (as stated in Judiciary Act of 1789) have the right to review decisions of state supreme courts where federal statutes or treaties were involved or when state laws had been upheld under the federal Constitution?  
-- Virginia sought to disregard Treaty of Paris (1783) and Jay's Treaty (1794) regarding confiscation of Loyalist lands.
2. Decision: Supreme Court rejected "compact theory" and state claims that they were equally sovereign with the federal gov't.
3. Significance: Upheld Supremacy Clause of the Constitution and federal judicial supremacy over the states.

D. ***McCulloch v. Maryland*** (1819) (Blow to states' rights)

1. Issue: Maryland tried to destroy its branch of the BUS by taxing its notes.
2. Marshall declared BUS constitutional invoking Hamilton's doctrine of implied powers (elastic clause of the constitution – "necessary & proper").
  - a. "Loose construction" given major boost.
  - b. Argued the Constitution derived from the consent of the people and thus permitted the gov't to act for their benefit.
3. Denied Maryland the right to tax the bank: "the power to tax involves the power to destroy" and "that a power to create implies the power to preserve."

E. ***Dartmouth College v. Woodward*** (1819) (protection of property rights from the states)

1. Issue: New Hampshire had changed a charter granted to the college by the British king in 1769. Republicans sought to remove "private" aspect of school & make it a state institution.  
-- Dartmouth appealed; defended by Daniel Webster, an alumnus.
2. Ruling: Charter was a contract; states could not invalidate it.
3. Significance:
  - a. Positive: safeguarded business from domination by the states.
  - b. Negative: set precedent giving corporations ability to escape gov't control.

F. ***Cohens v. Virginia*** (1821) (Blow to states' rights)

1. Significance: Supreme Court had the power to review decisions of the state supreme courts in issues involving powers of the federal gov't.  
-- Similar to *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee* case (see above)
2. Issue: Virginia courts convicted Cohens for selling lottery tickets illegally.

- a. State supreme court upheld the decision
- b. Marshall overturned it.

G. **Gibbons v. Ogden**, 1824 ("steamboat case") (Blow to states' rights)

1. Significance: Only Congress had the right to regulate interstate commerce.
2. Issue: NY tried to grant a monopoly of river commerce between NY & NJ to a private company (owned by Ogden). Gibbons had congressional approval to conduct business on the same river.
3. Court ruled interstate rivers were to be regulated by Congress, not individual states.

H. **Daniel Webster** an important influence in Marshall's decisions.

1. Argued Federalist and nationalist views before the Court.  
-- He actually "ghost wrote" some of the Marshall's opinions.
2. Classic speeches in the Senate, challenging states' rights and nullification, were similar to arguments he earlier made to the Supreme Court.

VIII. Foreign Policy after the War of 1812

A. **Rush-Bagot Treaty** (1817) – during Madison's presidency

1. Significantly limited naval armament on the Great Lakes.
2. By 1870, U.S. & Canada shared longest unfortified border in the world (5,500 mi)

B. **Treaty of 1818 (Convention of 1818)** with England (during Monroe's presidency)

1. Negotiated by John Quincy Adams, one of the nation's great sec. of states.
2. Provisions:
  - a. Fixed the American-Canadian border at the 49th parallel from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains.
  - b. 10-year joint occupation of Oregon Territory without surrender of claims.
  - c. Americans could share Newfoundland fisheries with Canada.

C. **Florida Purchase Treaty (Adams-Onís Treaty)**

1. U.S. already claimed West Florida where settlers forcibly arrived in 1810 and Congress ratified the conquest during War of 1812.
2. Revolutions in South America forced Spain to move its troops out from Florida.
  - a. Indians, runaway slaves, and white outcasts poured across the border into U.S. territory to attack settlers and then retreat south of the border.
  - b. Monroe ordered Andrew Jackson to attack the Indians and, if necessary, pursue them back into Florida.  
-- He was to respect all Spanish posts.

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3. Jackson swept through central and eastern Florida during the First Seminole War (1816-1818).
  - a. Captured Spanish cities and deposed the Spanish Governor (thus disobeying Monroe's orders)
  - b. Jackson executed 2 Amerindian chiefs and British supporters of Spain.
4. John Quincy Adams convinced Monroe's cabinet to offer an ultimatum to Spain.
  - a. Control the outlaws of Florida (which Spain was not equipped to do) or cede Florida to the U.S.
  - b. Spain realized it would lose Florida in any case; decided to negotiate.
5. **Adams-Onis Treaty (Florida Purchase Treaty) of 1819**
  - a. Spain Ceded Florida as well as claims to Oregon to the U.S.
  - b. U.S. abandoned claims to Texas (later become part of Mexico).

#### D. Monroe Doctrine & John Quincy Adams: Secretary of State

1. Certain European monarchies were concerned about Latin America's democratic revolutions and Europe's emerging democratic movements.
  - a. Saw democracy as a threat to absolute monarchy.
  - b. Sought to restore newly independent Latin American republics to Spanish rule.
2. Americans alarmed at European hostility to democracy in Western Hemisphere
3. Great Britain sought an alliance with U.S. to protect its interests in Latin America
  - a. 1823, British foreign secretary, George Canning, proposed a joint declaration to warn European despots to stay away from Latin American republics.
4. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams believed Britain wanted alliance to keep U.S. from taking Latin American territory and jeopardizing Britain's territories in the Caribbean.
  - a. Believed alliance would hamper U.S. expansion and was unnecessary.
  - b. Realized Europeans did not really pose an immediate threat to region.
5. **Monroe Doctrine** (1823) -- written by John Quincy Adams
  - a. President's annual message to Congress warned Europeans
    - i. Colonial powers could keep existing colonies but gain no new ones.
    - ii. Leave America alone; let new republics govern themselves
    - iii. Directed largely at Russia had designs on the Pacific coast
  - b. Nationalistic Americans widely supported it..

- Maintained Washington's tradition of avoiding an "entangling alliances."
- c. Foreign reaction
  - i. British reaction mixed.
    - Canning concerned Monroe Doctrine aimed at Britain as well.
    - British press favored protection of Latin American markets
  - ii. European monarchs angered and offended at U.S. position
  - iii. Latin American countries saw the U.S. merely protecting its own interests.
- e. Immediate impact of Monroe Doctrine was small
  - i. U.S. army and navy remained small and relatively weak
  - ii. Not until 1845 did Polk revive it and did it become more important
- f. Long-term impact: Monroe Doctrine became cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy during last half of 19th century and throughout 20th century.
- 6. John Quincy Adams one of most significant secretaries of state in U.S. history.
  - a. Oversaw Convention of 1818 establishing U.S.-Canadian Border
  - b. Adams-Onís Treaty: acquisition of Florida from Spain
  - c. Monroe Doctrine

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