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An Emerging Identity

TWO MAJOR EVENTS occurred in the United States to close out the eighteenth century. The first was a conflict that broke out between this country and France in 1797, when the French ministers in Paris attempted to extort a bribe of \$240,000 from American diplomats as the price for recognizing them and their mission. Insulted, all but one of these American diplomats returned home, and the country expressed its outrage with the cry, "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute." There followed what has been called a "Quasi-War" between the two nations during which their ships attacked one another on the high seas. This naval conflict from 1798 to 1800 might have led to an actual declaration of war save for the determination of President Adams to maintain the peace. In an effort to prepare for the possibility of war Congress authorized the creation of the Department of the Navy and the building of a fleet of warships. It also expanded the size of the army. The war hysteria diminished the popularity of the Republican Party, which was seen as pro-French and therefore as infected with "radical" or Jacobin notions about governing the country.

The genuine fears many Americans felt about Jacobin influence on Republican policy brought about the second major event. The Federalist majority in Congress decided to pass a series of laws that they felt would help combat foreign intrigues and conspiracies in the United States. These were the Alien and Sedition Acts, passed in June and July 1798, which placed restrictions on both citizens and aliens. These laws belied everything the nation professed about liberty and democracy

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and can be explained only by the fact that Americans were genuinely frightened about their safety. The first of these acts, the Naturalization Act, changed the period of residence required to become a citizen from five to fourteen years. This law was repealed in 1802, and the Naturalization Law of 1795 was reenacted. The Alien and Alien Enemies Acts authorized the President to imprison or deport anyone he deemed a threat to the peace and safety of the nation; they expired in 1800. The Sedition Act imposed fines and imprisonment on both citizens and foreigners convicted of publishing any "false, scandalous and malicious writing" against the government, Congress, or the President. Limited to two years, this act expired in 1801.

Jefferson and Madison responded to these measures by writing a set of resolutions passed by the Kentucky and Virginia legislatures in 1798. These Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, as they were called, condemned the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional and affirmed the right of the states to judge for themselves "the mode and measure of redress" whenever the national government assumed powers not specifically delegated to it by the Constitution. Moreover, the states were "duty bound to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil."

Interpose! There were some who genuinely believed that states had the right and obligation to nullify federal law whenever the central government acted improperly—and that states had the right to secede if necessary.

WITH THE BEGINNING of a new century the ten years of residence by the national government in Philadelphia mandated by the Residency Act of 1790 came to an end, and on April 24, 1800, President Adams signed the legislation that directed the relocation of the government to its new site along the Potomac River. On May 13 Congress stipulated that the second session of the Sixth Congress would convene on November 17 in the new Federal City, to be called Washington after the much revered first President.

In June President Adams traveled to Washington to inspect what had been built in the ten-mile square that Pierre Charles L'Enfant had laid out. He found what one congressman later described as a city in "ruins"—at least, that is the way it looked. Very few government build-

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ings had been completed. The Capitol and the Executive Mansion were still under construction. Only the Treasury, a two-story brick building next to the Executive Mansion, was ready for occupancy.

When Congress convened in November 1800, the members gathered in an unfinished Capitol in an unfinished city and learned that their first important decision involved settling an unfinished presidential election. John Adams had run for reelection on the Federalist ticket, along with General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina for Vice President. The Republicans in Congress held their first caucus for nominating their candidates and chose Thomas Jefferson to head their ticket, and Aaron Burr of New York as Vice President. They would continue holding caucuses to name their leaders for the executive branch through the election of 1824, when, after loud criticism that it was undemocratic, the system was finally abandoned. As a substitute, state legislatures at first put forward favored sons, but in 1832 both parties began holding conventions of delegates from every state to nominate their ticket, a practice that continues to this day.

The friends of Alexander Hamilton despised Adams for many offenses, perhaps most importantly his failure to ask Congress for a declaration of war against France. Toward the end of the campaign, Hamilton himself published a fifty-four-page pamphlet excoriating Adams for his public conduct and defects of character, citing his reputed weakness, vacillation, and ungovernable temper. What is more, Hamilton conspired with several Federalist electors to have them withhold their votes for Adams so that the more acceptable Pinckney would be elected President. As a result, Adams lost the election. He struck back by calling Hamilton "that bastard son of a Scotch merchant." Jefferson defeated Adams by winning seventy-three electoral votes to Adams's sixty-five. Pinckney took sixty-three and John Jay one. But Burr ended up with the same number of electoral votes as Jefferson: seventy-three. Republicans, in their desire to capture the executive branch, failed to withhold at least one vote for Burr, and the tie that resulted meant that the election would be determined by the lame-duck House of Representatives, not the new Congress in which Republicans had won sizable majorities in both chambers.

On February 11 Congress met, counted the electoral ballots, declared a tie, and then turned the final decision over to the House to

decide whether Jefferson or Burr would become President. It took thirty-seven ballots for the House to finally choose Jefferson on February 17, after an agreement was worked out by which it was promised that the Republicans would not dismantle the Hamiltonian fiscal system and that officeholders who were Federalists would not be arbitrarily removed because of their party affiliation. To prevent a recurrence of this unfortunate election, Congress proposed the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution in December 1803. This amendment, which provided separate balloting for President and Vice President, was ratified on September 25, 1804.

Just before leaving office Adams appointed a large number of judges to the various federal courts under a recently passed Judiciary Act. John Marshall, then serving as secretary of state, was nominated to preside as chief justice of the United States. Right down to the last day of his administration Adams kept bombarding the Senate with these "midnight" appointments, as the Republicans called them. The Federalists had lost the executive and legislative branches, but at least they could continue to dominate the judiciary branch. But one of the first things the Republicans did when they came into power was repeal the Judiciary Act. They also attempted to impeach several of the "midnight" appointees.

Jefferson took office on March 4, 1801, and in his inaugural address he tried to smooth over the differences and antagonism that existed between the two political parties. "We are all Republicans; we are all Federalists," he said. "If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve the Union or change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

It was a revolutionary moment in U.S. history. Without bloodshed or turmoil, without accusations of fraud and corruption, without any attempt at a conspiracy, the government had been turned over by one political party to another. Once the outcome of the presidential election had become known, Margaret Bayard Smith, the wife of the owner of an important newspaper in Washington, said, "The dark and threatening cloud that had hung over the political horizon rolled harmlessly away, and the sunshine of prosperity and gladness broke forth."

Although the founders had created a government in which the

legislature was the country, President certain members of the administration's spokesmen, successful committees, and other Presidents' agenda in his administration destined by giving could be explained. Dolph of Roanoke but later broke away and lambasted "this House [of R on the Journals,] burst, Jefferson's disclaimer was his. The president was very effective. Quincy, a Federalist, questions are settled.

Here, then, is American history: the branches of government centuries. Presidents without a declaration of independence have assumed as economic pan-control of national the nineteenth century the presidencies steered the House country take. But leadership was control of legisla-

An early examination when Jefferson declared the conditions of Algiers, including American r

legislature was the centerpiece and was given specific powers to run the country, President Jefferson sought to control Congress by encouraging certain members of the House and the Senate to serve as the administration's spokesmen. He generally worked through chairmen of powerful committees, such as the House Ways and Means Committee. Like other Presidents before and since he regularly proposed a legislative agenda in his annual messages to Congress, but he also operated clandestinely by giving several dinner parties a week at which his proposals could be explained and support for their passage elicited. John Randolph of Roanoke, who had been one of Jefferson's original spokesmen but later broke away, denounced the President's practice. He revealed and lambasted "the back-stairs influence of men who bring messages to this House [of Representatives], which, although they do not appear on the Journals, govern its decisions." When he heard about this outburst, Jefferson countered by declaring, "We never heard this while the declaimer was himself a backstairs man as he called it." But the President was very effective in imposing his will on the Congress. As Josiah Quincy, a Federalist from Massachusetts, noted, "all the great political questions are settled somewhere else," not in the halls of Congress.

Here, then, is one of the more important political threads of American history: the ongoing struggle between the executive and legislative branches of government to control national policy. Over the past two centuries Presidents have frequently sent military forces into battle without a declaration of war by Congress. And at various times, Presidents have assumed the power of the purse to deal with such problems as economic panics and depressions. Over the years the pendulum of control of national policy would swing back and forth. During much of the nineteenth century control remained with Congress, except during the presidencies of Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln, who both steered the House and Senate in the direction they wished to see the country take. But starting in the twentieth century, as will be seen, the leadership was reversed and many more Presidents assumed greater control of legislative action.

An early example of a President assuming wartime powers occurred when Jefferson decided to end the practice of bribing the Barbary nations of Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli to keep them from seizing American merchant ships in the Mediterranean and holding

American seamen for ransom. The President refused to continue paying the tribute, and the pasha of Tripoli reacted with a declaration of war, by ordering his soldiers to chop down the flagpole at the American consulate. Congress was not in session when this incident was reported; consequently, Jefferson on his own authority dispatched a squadron of warships to the area, but he did so without summoning the legislature into special session. And when Congress did return at its regular time there was no request for a declaration of war and no effort by the legislature to take action. Instead Congress raised import taxes in order to pay for the war. After several years of intermittent fighting, the pasha sued for peace and was paid a ransom of \$60,000 for the release of American prisoners. But payments to the other Barbary states continued until 1816.

This high-handed involvement in a war by the President who did not have congressional authorization encouraged Jefferson to expand his powers again after he decided to purchase Louisiana from France.

When he learned that the Spanish had closed New Orleans to American trade and that Napoleon, in his desire to revive the French empire in North America, had pressured the Spanish into ceding Louisiana back to France in the Treaty of San Ildefonso in October 1800, the President recognized it as a threat to the safety of the United States. "There is on the globe one single spot the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy," he said. "It is New Orleans." From the moment that France takes possession of New Orleans, he continued, "we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation."

Jefferson immediately notified the U.S. minister to France, Robert R. Livingston, to begin negotiations for the purchase of New Orleans, and he dispatched James Monroe as an envoy extraordinary with authority to offer \$2 million for New Orleans and West Florida. In the meantime Napoleon had abandoned his plan for a revival of the French colonial empire in the New World when his troops, attempting to put down a slave revolt, were soundly defeated in Haiti by native forces under Toussaint-Louverture. In need of money to further his military ambitions against Great Britain, he decided to sell the entire province of Louisiana. On April 11, 1803, the French foreign minister, Talleyrand, asked Livingston how much the United States would be willing to pay for this vast stretch of territory. At length they finally agreed on

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refused to continue with a declaration of war at the American side. This incident was recently dispatched a fleet to summoning the British to return at its terms. In the war and no effort was made to import taxes or to permit fighting, which cost 60,000 for the rest of the Barbary states.

President who did not allow Jefferson to expand the territory from France. He bought New Orleans to revive the French empire into ceding Louisiana in October 1800, which the United States. It is our Louisiana." From the beginning, he continued, "I have."

to France, Robert R. Livingston of New Orleans, negotiated the purchase of Florida. In the absence of the French, he attempted to put Louisiana under the control of native forces. He then sent his military to take the entire province. The minister, Talleyrand, would be willing to finally agreed on

60 million francs, or approximately \$15 million, and the treaty was signed on April 30. Of this amount, the French received \$11.25 million in six percent stock, not redeemable for fifteen years. The United States assumed a total of \$3.75 million to pay claims of its citizens against France.

It was an incredible bargain, and it doubled the size of the nation. But its constitutionality was immediately challenged by the Federalists, who argued that there was nothing in the Constitution to permit this annexation. Moreover, Congress did not have the power to incorporate this vast area and its people into the Union without the approval of the several states. The President had acted unlawfully, they insisted. Even Jefferson had doubts about the legality of his action, not that these doubts stopped him. "The Constitution," he explained to Senator John Breckinridge, "has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union." But he set aside these doubts in the belief that this acquisition was essential for the future safety of the country.

The Senate quickly ratified the treaty on October 20 by a vote of twenty-four to seven, with all but one Federalist voting against it. The House agreed and, after a long and stormy debate, authorized the certificates of stock to be paid to the French and directed the President to take control of Louisiana. The U.S. flag was raised above New Orleans on December 30, 1803.

Shortly after asking Congress for money to undertake the negotiations regarding Louisiana, Jefferson also requested a small appropriation of \$2,500 for an expedition to explore the Missouri River to its source. By the time Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their celebrated journey westward, Louisiana had been acquired, and the two men now undertook the exploration of a greatly expanded nation. They pushed west to the mouth of the Columbia River, giving the United States a claim to the Oregon country. The Lewis and Clark expedition, from 1803 to 1806, not only brought back significant scientific information but stimulated western settlement of this new expanse of territory.

In another action to broaden executive authority, Jefferson demanded a change in the judicial system. The Judiciary Act of 1802 restored a six-member Supreme Court and established six new circuit courts.

Jefferson also sought the removal of a number of justices who regularly injected politics into their decisions. Perhaps the most famous episode in this regard was the impeachment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Samuel Chase, which failed to result in his removal.

Jefferson was particularly offended when Chief Justice John Marshall read his decision in the case of *Marbury v. Madison*. Marbury was one of the midnight appointments but had not received his commission to serve as justice of the peace. He therefore sued James Madison, the secretary of state, and demanded that his commission be handed over. In the decision of February 24, 1803, Marshall dismissed Marbury's suit on the ground that he did not have the authority to act. He lacked jurisdiction because Section 13 of the Judiciary Act of 1789, which conferred such authority, was unconstitutional. This was the first time a congressional statute was voided by the high court. The decision pronounced the doctrine of judicial review, and although the doctrine was not used again for fifty years, it had the effect of raising the judiciary to equality with the other two branches of government.

THE FIRST ADMINISTRATION of Thomas Jefferson was an unqualified success in what it achieved, but the second, following his reelection in 1804, brought one failure after another. The basic problem was the continued harassment by the British against U.S. ships at sea and the impressment of American seamen. With the renewal of war between England and France, the British issued a series of orders-in-council that decreed a blockade of the European coast from Brest to the Elbe River and barred all ships from the French coastal trade. Napoleon countered by issuing the Berlin and Milan decrees, by which Britain was blockaded and neutral ships were threatened with seizure if they obeyed the orders-in-council. Caught between these two rivals, Jefferson asked Congress for an embargo that would forbid American ships to leave port for a foreign destination, and forbid foreign ships to leave American ports with U.S. goods. The Embargo Act of 1807 proved to be a disaster for the United States. It mainly affected American trade. Large coastal cities suffered tremendous losses, and New England verged on rebellion.

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The obvious failure of the Embargo Act prompted its repeal. It was replaced by the Non-Importation Act of March 1, 1809, which reopened trade with all foreign nations except France and England. And it encouraged Jefferson to imitate George Washington and step down after two terms in office. He was succeeded by James Madison, who also failed to compel the two belligerents to respect neutral rights. Congress tried to help by passing Macon's Bill No. 2, which removed all trade restrictions against France and England but decreed that if either of the belligerents revoked its decrees, the President was empowered to reimpose nonintercourse on the other belligerent. Naturally Napoleon took advantage of this invitation to deception by announcing, falsely, that he would revoke the Berlin and Milan decrees. And Madison believed him. The President announced the continuance of trade with France and its closing with Great Britain. It was not long before Madison realized he had been hoodwinked and made to play the fool. Britain responded by redoubling its impressment of American seamen.

As presidential leadership faltered, a newly elected member of the House of Representatives, Henry Clay, stepped forward and launched his congressional career with such brilliance that other members quickly succumbed to his direction. Elected Speaker on his first day in office—his earlier but brief career in the U.S. Senate provided proof of his outstanding abilities—he had every intention of determining national policy and the legislation to come to the floor of the House for a vote. Unlike his predecessors, who acted more like traffic cops in directing the flow of debate, in imitation of British speakers, Clay became an integral part of House operations and participated directly in the debates on important issues and in influencing their outcome. He appointed chairmen of committees who would assist his efforts to make the House a dominant force in national politics. He enforced the rules of the House and never hesitated to cut off debate when he felt that it was time for a vote. To prevent filibusters, he allowed members to call the previous question. On occasion he muzzled John Randolph and forbade him to enter the House chamber with one of his hunting hounds. Part of his success as Speaker and the reason he was reelected whenever he ran for the office was his eminently fair and evenhanded treatment of his colleagues. Added to this were his quick wit, his

ferocious intellect, his sharp tongue, and his mesmerizing talents as an orator and debater. He proved to be the first great Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Under his direction and with the help of like-minded members, known as War Hawks, who felt the British needed to be shown conclusively that the United States would no longer suffer the humiliations imposed by their policy toward neutral nations, Clay moved the House in the direction of seeking immediate redress. Working with the administration as much as possible, he helped persuade the President to ask Congress for a declaration of war. Most likely Madison had already made that decision, and a request for such a declaration came from Madison on June 1, 1812. After a three-day debate, steered by the Speaker, it was quickly passed in the House by a vote of seventy-nine to forty-nine. The Senate took more time but finally gave its consent on June 17. The President signed the declaration the next day and proclaimed that a state of war existed between the United States and Great Britain. Two days later Lord Castlereagh, the British foreign secretary, agreed to suspend the orders-in-council.

At first the war appeared to be a colossal mistake, if not a catastrophe. A three-pronged invasion of Canada by American soldiers ended in defeat on all fronts. The invasion also terminated any thought Canadians might have had about alienating themselves from British rule. Furthermore, General William Hull surrendered Detroit to British invaders out of fear that any resistance could bring a massacre of women and children in the city by Indians allied to the British. Meanwhile England blockaded the east and gulf coasts from New York to the mouth of the Mississippi River. Initially New England was exempt from the blockade in the hope that it would secede from the United States.

To make matters worse, Napoleon abdicated after a failed invasion of Russia, leaving England free to direct its full military force against its former colonies in America. In addition, the Creek Indians in the southeast began a general uprising along the Alabama frontier and massacred hundreds of Americans at Fort Mims, about thirty-five miles north of Mobile. The governor of Tennessee dispatched General Andrew Jackson of the west Tennessee militia to subdue the Creeks. Affectionately dubbed "Old Hickory" by his soldiers, in admiration of

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his leadership, Jackson defeated the Creeks after a series of engagements at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on March 27, 1814. As part of the peace treaty, he exacted about two-thirds of Creek land in Alabama and Georgia, which was ceded to the United States.

To crush the Americans and bring the war to a speedy conclusion, the British concocted a major offensive from three areas: Lake Champlain, the Chesapeake Bay region, and New Orleans. General Sir George Prevost headed the invasion from Canada. Commanding an army of over 10,000, he marched from the St. Lawrence River area to the western edge of Lake Champlain, where an American naval force blocked his further penetration into the United States and ultimately forced his withdrawal to Canada.

Veterans of the Napoleonic war were transported to America and on August 24, 1814, an army of 4,000 under the command of General Robert Ross landed in Maryland, marched to Washington, and burned the capital. The executive mansion, the Capitol, and most of the public buildings were put to the torch. Fortunately, a violent storm, which might have been a hurricane, struck during the night, extinguishing the fires and preventing what could have been the total destruction of the city.

The British had intended to take Baltimore but were repulsed by a strong American army that fortified the heights around the city. When the British fleet and army withdrew from the Chesapeake area, they were ordered to seize New Orleans and gain control of the lower Mississippi River valley. By the time they arrived off the coast of Louisiana, General Jackson was waiting for them. He had hurriedly marched to the threatened city after defeating the Creeks and had taken a position behind a millrace or ditch that stretched from the Mississippi River to a swamp about a mile away. The British tried to smash their way through this line of defense but failed. Over 2,000 British soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing in the action that took place on January 8, 1815, about ten miles south of New Orleans, while the Americans suffered only a dozen or so casualties.

The victory represented the first time the United States had demonstrated its will and capacity to defend its independence in a world hostile to its existence. Ordinary citizens had faced and defeated a powerful enemy. The Battle of New Orleans made Americans proud

of their country and themselves. "The last six months is the proudest period in the history of the republic," claimed *Niles Weekly Register*, the Baltimore newspaper. "*Who would not be an American? Long live the Republic.*"

American commissioners at Ghent—in what is now Belgium—produced a peace treaty with Great Britain on Christmas Eve 1814, weeks before the New Orleans battle took place. But the treaty would not go into effect until both sides approved it. The Senate received it on February 15, 1815, and ratified it the following day. And that is when the war officially came to a close.

The news of the victory and the writing of a peace treaty reached Washington at the same time that a delegation from a convention of New England states held in Hartford, Connecticut, arrived to demand constitutional changes in the operation of the government. The states represented at the convention had adopted resolutions as the price of their continued allegiance to the Union. But with the country wildly delirious over its military victory at New Orleans and the signing of a peace treaty in Ghent, the delegates realized that their demands would receive short shrift. So they quietly turned around and went home. The Hartford Convention was never controlled by secessionists, but suspicions of treason on the part of its participants lingered for many years. The suspicions were directed mainly at the Federalist Party, which was accused of initiating and participating in this disloyalty. As a consequence, the party lost popular support and steadily declined as a national organization. It staggered on for a few more years in a few New England states but finally disappeared. Its disappearance marked a suspension of political strife between two opposing parties. There was now only one national party—the Republican Party—and the next several years were known as "the Era of Good Feelings."

FOLLOWING THE WAR the country underwent a series of important changes that transformed not only the American people but their culture, their society, and their relations with foreign nations. Nationalism, the sense that a new breed of citizen had emerged, was perhaps the most obvious change. People were proud to call themselves Americans. No longer did they refer to themselves as New Yorkers, Virginians, or

Pennsylvanian. They were united in a republican world. And their predecessors. In the new world, they revived the time they gave breeches; instead of jackets. When they had a distinct American character.

The sense of national unity was reinforced by the Supreme Court decision in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) and the Court's decision in *Lessee v. The State of Kentucky* (1816) which claimed the right of the federal government to regulate interstate commerce. The Dartmouth College case (1819) upheld the U.S. Constitution's contract clause. The Court therefore could not overturn Supreme Court decisions more than once. The Court was created by the Constitution and the power to regulate any institution. Finally, in *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824) the Court upheld federal boat traffic between New York and New Jersey.

Another event of 1812 was the publication of literature. Based upon Irving's *Knickerbocker's History of New York* and *Diedrich Knickerbocker's*

Pennsylvanians, as in the past. They had a new and distinct identity. They were united in their victory over their enemy, and they were united in a republican form of government that was unique in the western world. Americans after the war were markedly different from their predecessors. No longer colonists, no longer British, no longer European, they reveled in the discovery of their special characteristics. Over time they gave up wearing wigs, silk stockings, ruffled shirts, and knee breeches; instead they donned trousers and shirts with neckties and jackets. When they spoke, their accent no longer sounded British but had a distinctly American twang. What is regarded today as the American character slowly emerged after the War of 1812.

The sense of nationhood was spurred on by a series of Supreme Court decisions that favored the central government at the expense of individual states. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), Chief Justice Marshall and the Court struck down one of Georgia's laws; in *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee* (1816) they contradicted the highest court in Virginia, which had claimed the case could not be appealed to the Supreme Court; and in the Dartmouth College case an action by the New Hampshire legislature in changing the charter of the college was reversed as a violation of the U.S. Constitution, which forbade impairing the obligation of contracts. The college's charter, declared Marshall, was a contract and therefore could not be altered. Then, in *McCulloch v. Maryland*, the Supreme Court declared that a tax levied by Maryland on the Baltimore branch of the Bank of the United States, which had been chartered by the federal government, was void. "The power to tax involves the power to destroy," Marshall ruled, and no state may tax or control any institution created by the national government within its borders. Finally, in *Gibbons v. Ogden* the court annulled the monopoly on steamboat traffic that the New York legislature had granted to Robert Livingston and Robert Fulton, declaring that only Congress can control interstate and foreign commerce.

Another expression of nationalism in the period following the War of 1812 was the beginning of a genuine and uniquely American form of literature. Between 1815 and 1830 a number of writers offered works based upon native themes and set in recognizable local places. Washington Irving was one such artist, whose *History of New York . . . by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809) and *Sketch Book* (1819) led the way in

providing stories about people and locales that Americans could recognize and enjoy. James Fenimore Cooper went farther. His works *The Spy* (1821), *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of the Leatherstocking series, and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) extolled American history and the life of the frontier. This early beginning of a distinctly American art form was later enlarged upon, and its artistry greatly surpassed, by more distinguished writers.

IN ADDITION TO this nationalistic outburst, the industrial revolution arrived within the country and began the process by which an independent national domestic economy would be achieved to spare the nation the problem of relying on foreign imports for the necessities of life. In New England and the Middle Atlantic states financial capital shifted from commerce to manufacturing, and something like 140 cotton mills began operating. Within a few years 500,000 spindles were said to be functioning throughout New England. Factories turned out iron, woolen, and cotton products, and these industries spread to the Ohio Valley and the Middle West. The market revolution that ensued converted the country in time from a purely agricultural to an industrial society. A transportation revolution witnessed the building of roads, bridges, and canals, the most famous of which was the Erie Canal in New York: it opened in 1825 and connected the Hudson River with Lake Erie, stimulating the growth of such cities as Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago. New York City thus became the leading commercial center in the United States. The transportation revolution also provided the country with railroads, starting in the 1820s. In the next forty years railroad tracks would stretch 3,000 miles across the continent.

The manufacturing interests of the northern states demanded higher tariffs to protect themselves against foreign—mainly British—competition, and they therefore supported the idea of free immigration to provide the laborers they needed for their mills and factories. They also naturally opposed westward migration, which could empty their establishments of workers; but they favored easy credit and a sound currency and banking system.

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vation of cotton. With the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793, it became possible to grow short-fiber cotton, whose seeds could be extracted by the cotton gin more than 300 times faster than removing them by hand. As a result, the plantation system moved steadily westward along the gulf coast and necessitated an ever-larger workforce. Slave labor was essential to the plantation system, and the laws regarding slavery in the South became more restrictive. By 1820 over one-third of the cotton grown in the United States was raised west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The original thirteen states of the early Republic had grown to nineteen by the end of the war, and a new era of expansion took shape. The Louisiana Purchase allowed thousands to seek a better life in the West. By 1818 about 60,000 settlers had crossed the Mississippi River and penetrated deep into the interior along the Missouri River. St. Louis became a bustling city cashing in on the fur trade that had opened up. Steamboats plied the Mississippi River from the upper Midwest to New Orleans. It had taken British colonists 150 years to occupy an inland area of about 100 miles from the coastline. In less than fifty years, following this "Second War for Independence," Americans, bursting with determination, optimism, and self-confidence, would stretch the boundaries of their country south to the Gulf of Mexico and the Rio Grande, north to the 49th parallel, and west to the Pacific Ocean. It was the true beginning of a new nation that by the end of the nineteenth century would rise to become a world power.

Americans of the early nineteenth century were intent on building a materialistic society, one dedicated to business, trade, and the acquisition of wealth. To them, money meant everything. "No man in America is contented to be poor, or expects to continue so," observed one foreign traveler. "Go ahead. Go ahead"—that was the spirit of the age. "The whole continent presents a scene of *scrambling* and roars with greedy hurry," commented another visitor. "Go ahead is the order of the day, the real motto of the country." Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts agreed. "Our age," he said, "is full of excitement" and rapid change.

Americans were committed to the work ethic. It had been prevalent in the country since the arrival of the first English settlers, and by the nineteenth century it had taken on a special urgency and new purpose.

"Work," lectured one man, "and at eighteen you shall . . . live in plenty, be well clothed, well housed, and able to save." Other rewards would follow. "Be attentive to your work, be sober and religious, and you will find a devoted and submissive wife; you will have a more comfortable home than many of the higher classes in Europe." Not only will you be better off and more comfortable, he continued, but you will be admired by everyone in your community. "He who is an active and useful member of society, who contributes his share to augment the national wealth and increase the numbers of the population, he only is looked upon with respect and favor."

With such motivation, it is little wonder that these Americans developed a strong and successful economy. Fired by ambition and purpose, committed to the work ethic, and appreciative of the seemingly limitless wealth they discovered in the natural resources surrounding them, they reached, within a relatively short time, the "take off" stage in becoming a powerful industrial society.

GOVERNMENT CHANGED AS well, and Madison initiated the new direction by calling for a different approach in the way Washington operated. In his annual message he urged the Congress to take the lead in safeguarding the economic interests of the nation. He recommended the creation of another national bank to provide sound credit and currency, the imposition of a protective tariff to encourage the establishment and growth of native manufactures, and the financing of internal improvements to promote westward expansion. These were Federalist doctrines, now advanced and supported by ardent nationalists who demanded a more modern concept of the responsibilities of government in protecting the welfare and liberties of the American people and in accelerating the emerging market revolution. "England is the most formidable power in the world," exclaimed Representative John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. "We, on the contrary, are the most growing nation on earth."

Henry Clay, now returned as Speaker of the House of Representatives following his sojourn in Europe as a commissioner who helped draft the peace treaty at Ghent, viewed these economic proposals as essential for the continued life, growth, and prosperity of this country

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and set about enacting them into law. Using the enormous powers he had earlier built into the office of Speaker, he won support in the House for a series of measures that he later articulated in what he called his American System—that is, a system to approve tariffs, internal improvements, and viable currency and credit. Before President Madison's term in office ended, a number of these proposals had become law. In 1816 the Second National Bank of the United States was created that was similar to the First Bank, but its capital stock was larger and it was obliged to pay the government a bonus of \$1.5 million. Calhoun, as chairman of the House Committee on the National Currency, wanted to use the bonus, along with dividends from the government's bank stock, to construct roads and canals that would stimulate commercial development. "Let us then bind the Republic together with a perfect system of roads and canals," he cried in presenting his bill. "Let us conquer space." But Madison had doubts about the constitutionality of the bill after it passed Congress and vetoed it just days before he left office.

On April 27, 1816, Congress also enacted the first protective tariff in U.S. history. It established a twenty-five-percent duty on woolen and cotton goods and a thirty-percent duty on iron products. The whole idea was to encourage manufacturing in this country and block competition from foreign nations, which could easily undercut the price of native products by companies just getting started. Furthermore Congress increased the size of the navy, and created an army of 10,000 men. It was a wholly new approach to governmental operations in that the central government, not the states, was expected to provide the kind of leadership that would advance the interests of the entire nation. It justified Calhoun's claim that the United States, as a single unity, was "the most growing nation on earth."

Madison was replaced as President by James Monroe, the last of the so-called Virginia Dynasty, which included Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe and endured for a total of twenty-four years. Monroe, along with his secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, tended to pursue foreign rather than domestic affairs, and together they acquired Spanish Florida by treaty and formulated the Monroe Doctrine, addressing foreign intrusion in the western hemisphere.

The acquisition of Florida came about because the Seminole Indians

in Florida regularly crossed the border into the United States, borders that white men had created that meant nothing to these Native Americans in their pursuit of enemies, food, and adventure. The Seminoles regularly attacked American settlements in Georgia and Alabama and then retreated back into Florida, where they knew the Americans would not pursue them. Monroe decided to put an end to this practice and instructed his newly appointed secretary of war, Calhoun, to direct General Andrew Jackson, now the commander of the U.S. southern army, to halt these Indian invasions and if necessary to cross the border and attack them in their towns in Spanish territory. Jackson, a very aggressive general, decided on a more productive course of action and asked permission to seize Florida from the Spanish. That would be the surest way of dealing with the Indian problem and bringing the incursions along the American frontier to a complete halt. As far as can be determined, Jackson received permission from Monroe himself, or thought he did, although the President's letter was rather guarded, as might be expected. So Jackson slammed across the Florida border, killed a number of Seminoles, and burned their towns. He also captured two British nationals, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister, accused of aiding the Indians, and had them executed: one hanged, the other shot by a firing squad. Finally, Jackson captured St. Marks and Pensacola, the two important seats of Spanish authority in Florida, and turned them over to the United States.

Henry Clay was horrified—or so he said. He harbored a grudge against Monroe for selecting Adams instead of himself as secretary of state, and he used the invasion as an excuse to lambaste the administration. After all, Jackson had invaded Florida, had engaged in hostilities with the Indians and Spanish, and had executed foreign nationals without a declaration of war by Congress. Clay wanted the general punished and his actions repudiated, so he gave a powerful speech in the House of Representatives demanding that Jackson be censured. He failed in this attempt, but he did succeed in making a lifelong enemy of Old Hickory.

Adams defended Jackson's action both within the administration and with Spanish and British officials. After all, he said, Americans had suffered long enough because of the inability of Spain to control the movement of the Seminoles into the United States. It would be best

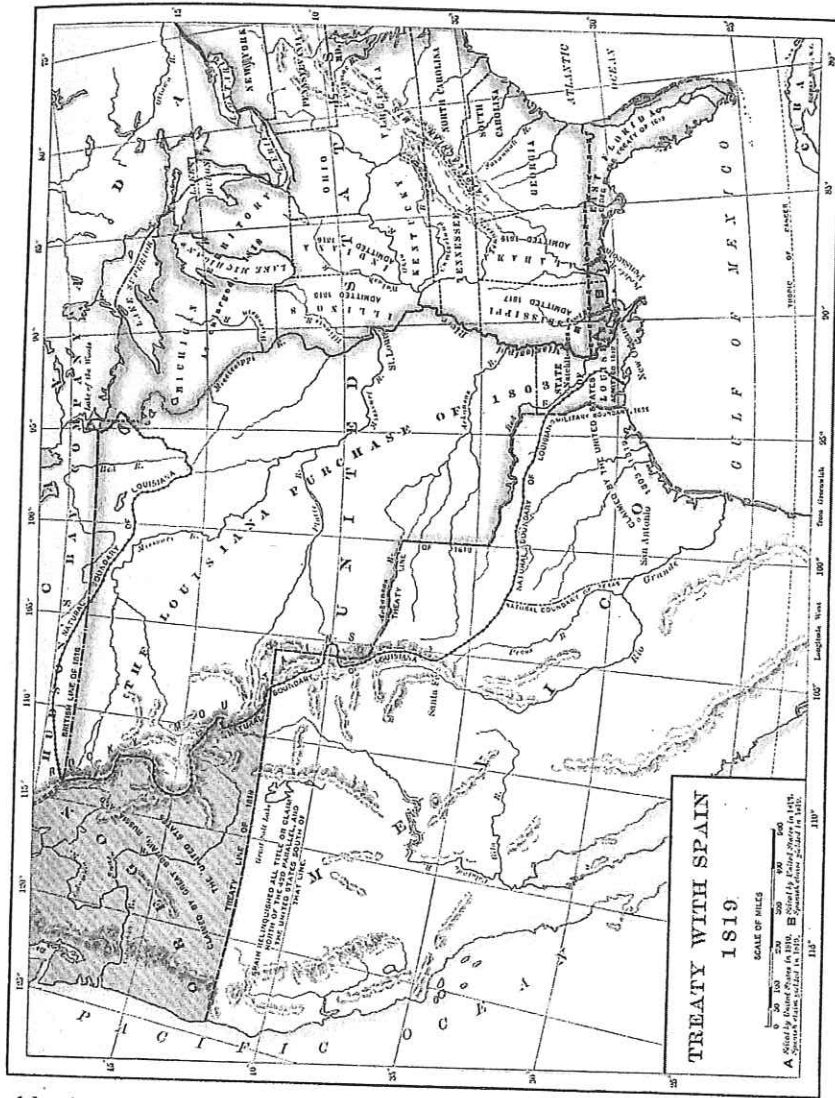


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Adam's Onís Treaty with Spain

for Spain to sell us this troublesome territory, he argued. The result was the Adams-Onís Treaty of February 22, 1819, by which Spain ceded Florida to the United States and, in return, the United States agreed to assume the claims of American citizens against Spain to the extent of \$5 million. In addition, the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase was determined and the United States inherited the claims of Spain to the northwest country beyond the Louisiana territory.

Quite obviously the nation was growing in more ways than Calhoun imagined. New states had been admitted to the Union during the past decade: Louisiana in 1810, Indiana in 1816, Mississippi in 1817, and Illinois in 1818. Then, in 1819, Congress took up the requests for statehood from Alabama and Missouri. There was no problem in granting Alabama's admission, but Missouri's unleashed a storm of objections that almost resulted in the breakup of the Union.

The Missouri Territory had been carved out of the Louisiana Purchase, and it sought admission as a slave state. If granted it would be the first state totally located west of the Mississippi River. But it would also upset the numerical balance between free and slave states. This was obviously a situation that called for compromise, but neither the slave nor free states seemed prepared to reconcile their demands with each other's needs. The matter came to a head when Representative James Tallmadge of New York introduced an amendment to the Missouri enabling act which prohibited the further introduction of slaves into the territory and mandated the emancipation of all slaves subsequently born in Missouri when they reached the age of twenty-five.

Southerners were infuriated by this bold attempt to allow Congress to outlaw slavery in the territories. They insisted they had a right under the Constitution to take their slaves anywhere in the territories and were determined to protect that right under all circumstances. After all, the Constitution protected property; and slaves, according to southerners, were property. The debate in Congress grew more and more heated with each passing day. "If you persist," Representative Thomas W. Cobb of Georgia shouted at Tallmadge, "the Union will be dissolved. You have kindled a fire which all the waters of the ocean cannot put out, which seas of blood can only extinguish."

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"Let it come," roared Tallmadge in response.

Despite the anger and threats of secession, the amendment passed the House by a vote of 79 to 67. But the Senate, where southerners had greater numerical strength and friendlier sympathizers, defeated the measure 31 to 7. With mounting tension and verbal explosions a daily occurrence in the lower chamber, Speaker Clay feared the worst. "The words, civil war and disunion," he told a friend, "are uttered almost without emotion."

A possible escape from this predicament occurred when Maine, the northern province of Massachusetts, petitioned Congress for admission to the Union as a separate and free state. Thus the admission of both Missouri and Maine would at least maintain the numerical balance between free and slave states. As part of the compromise Senator Jesse Thomas of Illinois offered an amendment to the Missouri enabling act which prohibited the extension of slavery into the Louisiana Territory north of 36° 30' with the exception of Missouri itself.

And that did the trick. Although the House of Representatives rejected a single bill containing all these provisions, it miraculously passed three separate measures that did the same thing, namely admit both states and restrict slavery north of 36° 30' in the Louisiana Territory. Southerners did not take exception to the latter provision, recognizing that slavery could not exist in such a northern clime. Presumably they could take their slaves into the western and southern territories. "The Southern & Western people talked so much, threatened so loudly, & predicted such dreadful consequences," declared Representative William Plumer of New Hampshire, "... that they fairly frightened our weak-minded members into an abandonment of their stand against slavery in the territories."

Before opposition could be organized against these measures, Speaker Clay signed them and hurried them to the Senate, where they received quick passage. John Randolph called for a reconsideration of the bills, but Clay ruled him out of order and the House sustained his ruling. It was a close call.

Without question, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 became law because of the parliamentary skills of Henry Clay. From that moment on he was known as the "Great Compromiser" or "Great Pacificator." "The Constitution of the Union was in danger," wrote Langdon Cheves

of South Carolina, "& has been Saved," thanks to Henry Clay. Without bloodshed or dismemberment of the country, Missouri entered the Union. But an obvious problem remained. Secession may have been avoided; still, the central question of whether Congress had the right to prohibit slavery in the territories had not been resolved to the satisfaction of either the North or the South. It would plague the country for the next forty years. But as Abraham Lincoln noted years later, Henry Clay made the difference. As long as Clay remained alive, Lincoln said, he could always find the compromise to keep the country from rushing into civil war and the dissolution of the Union.

President Monroe signed the several bills that admitted Maine and Missouri as the twenty-third and twenty-fourth states comprising the United States, but he had little to do with bringing about this historic settlement. He left domestic affairs pretty much to Congress, where Clay played the most dominant role. This freed the President to concentrate on foreign affairs, in which he scored several successes. He recognized the independence of those Latin American nations that had escaped Spanish rule and gained the approval of Congress. The Republic of Colombia was recognized on June 19, 1822; Mexico on December 12, 1822; Chile and Argentina on January 27, 1823; Brazil on May 26, 1824; the Federation of Central American States on August 4, 1824; and Peru on May 2, 1826. He approved the treaty signed with Russia that fixed the southern boundary of Alaska, a Russian possession, at $54^{\circ} 40'$; he agreed to the acquisition of Florida and the settlement of the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase; and in his annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823, he announced what has been called the Monroe Doctrine. In justice it must be pointed out that his secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, served as the principal negotiator in all these successes.

When the members of the Quadruple or Holy Alliance (France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia) agreed in 1822 at the Congress of Verona to restore King Ferdinand VII of Spain to full authority after he had surrendered and accepted the demands of those who insisted on a constitutional monarchy, Great Britain became concerned about such a policy and especially fearful that the Holy Alliance might attempt to restore Spanish control of its lost possessions in South America. England enjoyed economic advantages in dealing with independent South

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American states and did not want to see a return to the previous arrangement, which favored Spanish interests. George Canning, the British foreign secretary, suggested to Richard Rush, the U.S. minister to England, that their two countries jointly agree to oppose any intervention by European powers in the New World. The suggestion was forwarded to Washington, where all the cabinet officers, except Adams, favored a joint Anglo-American declaration. Adams, on the other hand, supported the action but not as a joint undertaking. He wanted the United States to make the statement independently. We have "a very suitable and convenient opportunity," he said, "... to take our stand against the Holy Alliance and at the same time to decline the overture of Great Britain. It would be more candid, as well as more dignified, to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war."

A cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war! That is precisely the way it would be perceived by the world. We must not go that route, argued Adams. We have to stand up and declare our own position as a sovereign, independent nation. The United States, he insisted, should openly declare the principles on which this government was founded; it should reject the notion of spreading those principles elsewhere by force of arms; and it should state emphatically that this nation also expects Europe to refrain from propagating its principles in this hemisphere or from subjugating "by force any part of these continents to their will."

These doctrines of non-intervention and non-colonization in the New World by any European country, or any other country, formed the core of the Monroe Doctrine and were presented by the President to Congress in his annual message rather than in diplomatic dispatches, as Adams initially suggested. Much of the message as drafted was written by Adams, and it advanced four important doctrines: first, the American continents were no longer to "be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power"; second, in "wars of the European powers in matters pertaining to themselves, we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy, so to do"; third, the United States would consider any attempt by Europeans "to extend their system to any portion of this Hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety"; and fourth, with "existing Colonies or dependencies

of any European power, we have not interfered, and shall not interfere."

Secretary Adams enunciated one other doctrine dealing with foreign affairs that is not as well known. He used the occasion of a Fourth of July oration in 1821 to announce it. He delivered his remarks from the rostrum of the House of Representatives and faced his audience dressed in the academic robe of a university professor. Staring pointedly at his audience, he declared that the United States would always be "the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all" nations but that it must not go "abroad in search of monsters to destroy" by enlisting under banners other "than our own." Such a departure by the United States from a rational foreign policy would unhappily inaugurate America's reach for "dominion and power" in the world and would ultimately result in the loss of its own "freedom and independence."

FOLLOWING THE WAR of 1812 the United States experienced not only a surge of nationalistic pride and the advent of an industrial revolution but a marked advance in the development of a democratic society. Universal white manhood suffrage was quickly achieved after 1815, prompted by the arrival of many new, western states that placed no property or religious restrictions on adult white males. This breakthrough in the qualifications for voting encouraged the older, eastern states to convene conventions that altered their constitutions and broadened suffrage. These actions were the first important steps in moving the country from a republican to a democratic government. Several more such moves remained—such as providing voting and citizenship rights to those of a different race and sex. But the country was headed in a new direction, although it would take time and even bloodshed to achieve a more perfect Union.

Another dynamic force impacting the growth of democracy in the United States was the rise of a self-conscious working class, resulting in large part from the growth of factories and the arrival of ever larger numbers of immigrants from Europe. They knew what they needed and did not hesitate to express their wishes, demanding social, economic, and even political legislation to satisfy their wants. For one thing, they demanded the abolition of imprisonment for debt; they

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