

Jeffersonian America

An Expanding Empire of Liberty, 1800–1824

“The revolution of 1800 was as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form; not effected, indeed, by the sword, as that, but by the rational and peaceable instrument of reform, the suffrage of the people.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON to Judge Spenser Roane, 1819

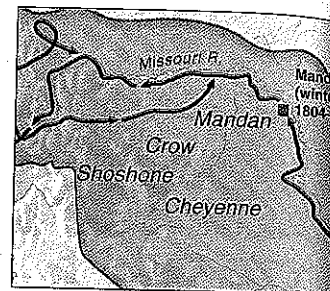
Nevertheless, the Federalist fears captured in the cartoon proved unfounded. President Jefferson turned out to be a rather different person from Vice President Jefferson, the leader of the Republican opposition during the Adams administration. Rather than mount a full-scale attack on Federalist policy, Jefferson adopted a less confrontational approach. In his presidential inaugural, he struck a conciliatory tone and reminded Americans: “We are all republicans—we are all federalists.”

In his inaugural Jefferson also promised the nation “a wise and frugal government.” Implementing this vision of government, however, proved difficult as he took over the reigns of power in his first term of office. The opportunity to purchase the Louisiana Territory, thus doubling the size of the new nation, led him to cast aside the idea of strict construction, which restricted the powers of the federal government to those explicitly delegated by the Constitution. By the end of Jefferson’s second term, some Americans came to believe that the Jeffersonian Republicans had become indistinguishable from their Federalist opponents. Jefferson’s anointed successor, James Madison, made compromises that some of his supporters believed amounted to a betrayal of the ideas he had championed as a member of the Republican opposition in the 1790s.

Foreign affairs proved especially vexing for both Jefferson and Madison. Each had tried to prevent American entanglement in the war raging between Britain and France. Despite their efforts, however, America was dragged into the European conflict, eventually going to war against Britain in 1812. Although the war had been fought against the British, the conspicuous losers in the conflict were the Indian tribes in the Northwest and Southwest, who lost a valuable ally in Britain and suffered military defeats by American troops. The demands of fighting the war also forced Republicans to reconsider the necessity of many aspects of Hamiltonian economic policy. By the end of the presidency of James Monroe, who became the fourth Virginian to become president, the old political labels of Republican and Federalist had become nearly meaningless, soon to be supplanted by two new political parties.



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Politics in Jeffersonian America



Jefferson's presidential triumph in 1800 ushered in a new era in American political life. After a decade of Federalist rule, and despite the courts remaining bastions of Federalist power, Republicans now controlled the presidency and the Congress. Despite Jefferson's efforts to avoid the bitter partisanship that had characterized politics during the previous decade, American politics remained deeply divisive. In an age when gentlemen lived by a code of honor, political slights could easily turn into personal insult, and might result in tragic results. Before the end of his presidency, Jefferson's vice president, Aaron Burr, would slay Jefferson's longtime opponent, Alexander Hamilton, in a duel, and Burr would become a fugitive from justice. Former president John Adams sarcastically observed that his fellow citizens had made great strides in the "arts of lying and libeling and the other arts which grow out of them, such as wielding the cudgel and pistol."

Jefferson's Visions of Government

Jefferson set out his views of government in his inaugural address on March 4, 1801. While invoking a shared set of values, including faith in representative government and the rule of law, Jefferson also made clear how his idea of government differed from that of his opponents. Throughout the 1790s Federalists had worked to endow the new government of the United States with sufficient power to become a great nation, modeled on Britain's commercial and military might. Following Hamilton's lead, Federalists had successfully increased the size of the central government and military. Federalists had not only increased the size of government but they had also used their expansive view of federal power to crush political opposition. Rather than embrace the Federalists' strong centralized government, Jefferson hoped to reduce the size of the federal government.

Jefferson invoked the ideal of liberty, not power. He described the state governments as the proper defenders of liberty. In contrast to Federalists, who supported a national bank and enacted a host of taxes, including the unpopular whiskey tax, Jefferson sought to reduce the burdens government placed on the people. Rather than favor commerce he emphasized the "encouragement of agriculture" with "commerce as its handmaid." To achieve his goal of "economy in public expense," he would scale back the size of government. An alert citizenry, a vigorous militia, and strong state governments were the foundation upon which to build America's future. Finally, opposing laws such as the Sedition Act,

Jefferson praised freedom of the press, reminding Americans that political conflict was a testimony to the vitality of American life, not a sign of the nation's weakness.

The Jeffersonian Style

Jefferson's inaugural not only set out his philosophical differences with Federalists but also gave him the occasion to dramatize them. Jefferson's vision had always melded democratic ideals to aristocratic tastes. He labored to create a different presidential style from those who came before him. Jefferson loathed the pomp and ceremony that his predecessors, including both Washington and Adams, had used to exalt the office of the presidency. Rather than ride to his inaugural in an elegant coach, Jefferson walked behind a small band of Maryland militia. Instead of delivering his annual address to Congress from a monarch-like throne as his predecessors in office had done, he chose to have a clerk read his addresses to Congress. Jefferson rejected the elegant balls that Federalists had staged during the Washington and Adams presidencies as smacking too much of European-style monarchy.

Yet although he sought to replace the aristocratic style of his predecessors with something more democratic, Jefferson remained a rich Virginian slaveholder whose tastes were anything but common. Although Jefferson dispensed with pomp and formality, his presidency still reflected his aristocratic tastes. Dinner with Jefferson involved an unusual mix of informality and aristocratic style. He entertained his guests in informal attire, wearing a pair of worn leather slippers, an informality that shocked some of

his guests. Yet guests invited to Monticello, the home he designed himself, in the mountains of western Virginia (7.1), found themselves in an architectural masterpiece that confidently proclaimed Jefferson's wealth and exquisite taste. The food and wine served at these dinners were equally impressive. Jefferson regaled his dinner guests with the sensual delights of his table and the dazzling brilliance of his dinner conversation, which ranged over everything from philosophy to agriculture. A connoisseur of fine wines, Jefferson's annual wine bill for his first term in office came to \$2,400 dollars, almost ten times the yearly income of a typical artisan of his days.

Political Slurs and the Politics of Honor

Literate and urbane, Thomas Jefferson was deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, particularly its emphasis on reason and science. One of Jefferson's many interests was fossils.

Jefferson wrote about mammoths in his book *Notes on Virginia*. Four months after his inauguration, Jefferson's friend, the artist Charles Wilson Peale, set out on an expedition to exhume the remains of a

7.1 Jefferson's Monticello

Jefferson's design for Monticello borrowed elements from English architecture, including the classical columns, and the latest Parisian styles, such as the domed roof that caps the building.



mammoth discovered in upstate New York. President Jefferson, enthusiastically supporting Peale's outing, even authorized the use of U.S. military equipment to aid in the dig. The expedition proved to be a monumental undertaking, as reflected in Peale's painting of the event (7.2). The disinterment of the giant fossil testified to American ingenuity. To

Jefferson, the expedition was a fitting symbol of the new nation's commitment to the values of the Enlightenment.

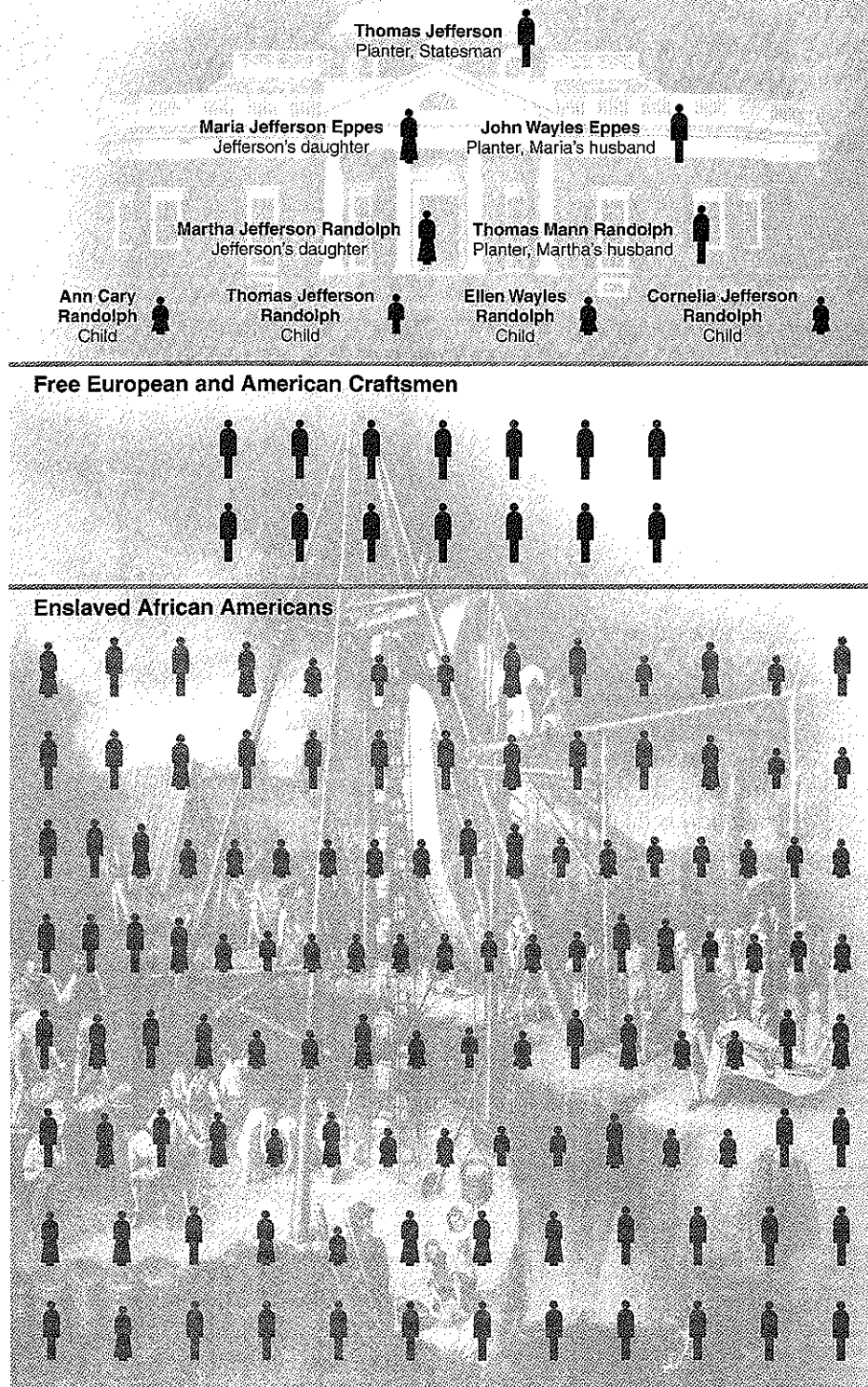
His interest in fossils and mammoth bones, however, provided an easy target for his enemies, who mocked him as "the mammoth philosopher" or the "mammoth of democracy." In response, a group of his supporters attempted to turn Jefferson's passionate

7.2 Exhuming the First American Mastodon

Charles Wilson Peale's painting of the exhumation of the mammoth is a tribute to American ingenuity and the Enlightenment values esteemed by Jefferson. The centerpiece of the portrait is not the fossils, but a machine designed to remove water from the dig.

Who Lived at Monticello?

Thomas Jefferson and his family lived at Monticello with enslaved African Americans and free European and American craftsmen. This chart represents the population of this busy plantation in the late 1790s.



7.3 Residents of Monticello
The vast majority of those living on Jefferson's land were African American slaves.

interest in mammoths to his advantage. The president was presented with a “mammoth cheese” weighing more than 1,200 lbs. The delivery of the “mammoth cheese” to the president became a news sensation and filled newspaper columns for months. Mammoth jokes, however, were among the milder partisan attacks leveled at Jefferson. The president’s lavish home at Monticello also prompted sarcastic comments. Federalists pointed out the obvious contradiction between the president’s support for democracy and his own aristocratic tastes in architecture, food, and wine. His enemies also highlighted the contradiction between Jefferson’s impassioned defense of liberty and his life as a slaveholder. Monticello was a large working plantation and was therefore home to a sizable African American slave community. Indeed, as the chart (7.3) illustrates, slaves vastly outnumbered Monticello’s free white population, which included Jefferson’s family and a variety of white laborers living on the mountaintop.

Attacks on the president became intensely personal. One of Jefferson’s former supporters, the disgruntled newspaper editor James Callender, accused Jefferson of taking Sally Hemings, a Monticello slave, “as his concubine.” This political cartoon (7.4) portrays Jefferson as a cock courting the hen Sally Hemings. The press repeated the charge that the president had a slave mistress, and tales of Jefferson’s “Monticellan Sally” appeared in newspapers.

Although Jefferson chose to ignore these accusations, the Sally Hemings scandal persisted long after he left the presidency. Among the descendants of Monticello’s slaves, the notion that Jefferson had fathered children with Sally Hemings became part of a family oral tradition that persisted for more than two centuries. Many descendants of Jefferson and modern scholars doubted the truth of these rumors until modern forensic DNA testing provided strong evidence that a male in Jefferson’s blood line was the likely father of at least one child by Sally Hemings. Although not

everyone has been persuaded, many scholars now believe that Jefferson did have some type of sexual relationship with Hemings.

Federalist attacks on Jefferson went well beyond attacks on his personal character. The most vocal critics of the president charged that had white Southerners not been entitled to count three-fifths of their slaves in the apportioning electoral votes in 1800, then Jefferson would have lost to Adams. However, the charge that Jefferson was a "Negro President" was not entirely true, since Jefferson won clear majorities in the North and mid-Atlantic and his margin in the Electoral College would have been even greater if presidential electors from states in those regions had more accurately reflected the popular vote in those states that supported Jefferson.

Jefferson was not the only politician whose reputation was dragged through the mud. Attacks on character were frequent, and in a culture in which honor played a central role; they were a serious matter that demanded an appropriate response. If an apology or retraction was not forthcoming, a man might demand satisfaction on the field of honor, resulting in a duel. A number of leading politicians participated in duels, and

"Of all the Damsels on the green
on mountain or in valley
A lass so luscious ne'er was seen
As Monticellan Sally"

Boston Gazette, 1802

gentlemen typically owned a pair of dueling pistols. Often, friends intervened and prevented the duel. In the most famous duel of the era, no one stopped the face-off between Vice President Aaron Burr and his longtime rival in New York politics, Alexander Hamilton. Burr's candidacy for governor of New York in 1804 was undermined by Hamilton's attacks. A newspaper reported that Hamilton had described the ex-vice president as "a dangerous man and one who ought not be trusted with the reins of government." Hamilton also insulted Burr's personal integrity and honor.

These attacks on his character led Burr to demand an apology. When Hamilton refused to apologize, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel. On July 11, 1804, the two men met across the river from New York City in Weehawken, New Jersey,

where Burr fatally shot Hamilton.

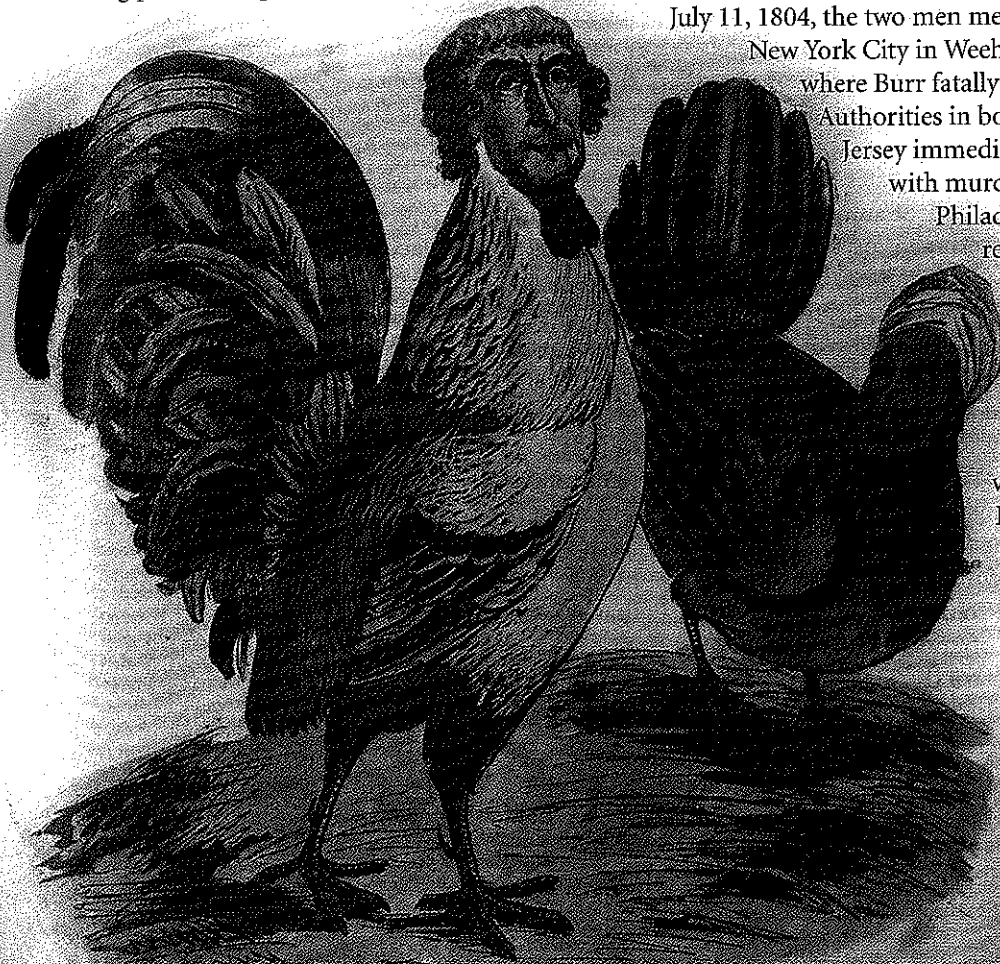
Authorities in both New York and New Jersey immediately charged Burr with murder, and Burr fled to Philadelphia, where he remained a fugitive.

News of the duel spread throughout the country.

In Baltimore, angry citizens burned the former vice president in effigy. Eventually, the charges against Burr were dropped; although dueling was still illegal in most states, duelers were rarely prosecuted.

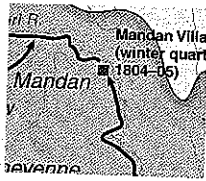
7.4 Jefferson and Sally Hemings

Jefferson's enemies spread rumors about his illicit sexual relationship with his slave Sally Hemings. This caricature of Jefferson as a cock and Sally Hemings as a hen presents the scandal in comic visual terms.



What role did honor play in the political culture of Jeffersonian America?

An Expanding Empire of Liberty



Many of Jefferson's supporters hoped that the new president would radically restructure the balance of power between the states and the federal government. They would be disappointed. Rather than a wholesale assault on the Hamiltonian system, Jefferson opted for a more modest, less confrontational approach. The exception was the judiciary. The Federalists had expanded and seeded it with opponents of Jefferson, presenting him with a major challenge.

Another challenge was posed by the unexpected opportunity to purchase the entire Louisiana Territory from the French emperor Napoleon. To justify this purchase, which required an enormous exercise of federal power, Jefferson would need to accept a Hamiltonian view of the Constitution. Jefferson's vision of an expanding "empire of liberty" peopled by independent yeoman farmers came into conflict with his vision of limited government.

Dismantling the Federalist Program

Jefferson's approach to change in government was moderate and conciliatory. Instead of purging government of all Federalists, he dismissed only those who were corrupt or inept or who posed serious obstacles to his agenda. Similarly, although Jefferson had contemplated declaring the Sedition Act unconstitutional, he simply refused to bring forward any new indictments, pardoning individuals prosecuted by Federalists and allowing the law to expire.

Jefferson remained committed to the ideal of a republican system in which the states, not the federal government, retained the bulk of authority. The powers of the federal government pertained to "the external and mutual relations only of these states." The states were responsible for the "principal care of our persons, our property." With states' rights in mind, Jefferson reduced the size of the federal government. He directed Albert Gallatin, his new secretary of the Treasury, to eradicate the national debt created by previous Federalist administrations. Gallatin severed the connection between the Bank of the United States and the federal government, using the sale of the government's interest in the bank to lower the national debt. To make up for the loss of income from the repeal of unpopular taxes, Jefferson relied on the sale of Western lands and income from tariffs on imports. Convinced that the militia was sufficient to protect America's peacetime interests, he slashed the budget of both the navy and the army, sharply reducing the size of both. It was a decision that would create serious problems for Jefferson in his second term. Without a powerful navy to protect American merchant ships, the new nation's

commerce could be threatened by the navies of France and Britain.

The Courts: The Last Bastion of Federalist Power

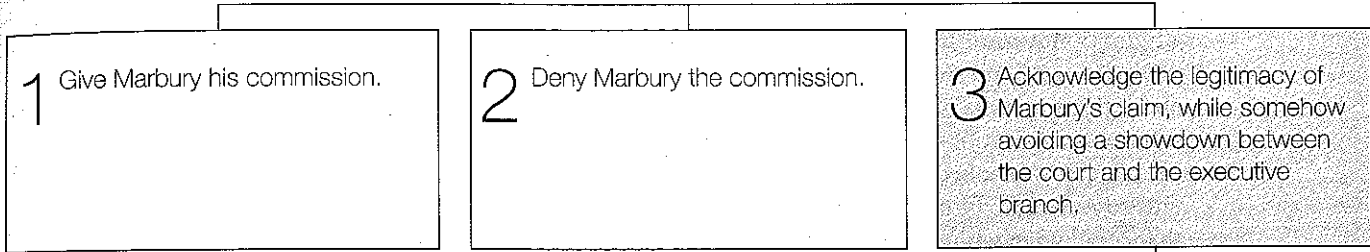
Early in his first term, Jefferson confided to a supporter that the Federalists "have retired into the judiciary as a stronghold." One of the last acts of John Adams's Federalist administration had been the passage of the Judiciary Act of 1801, which created a host of new circuit and district court judges and a variety of other legal offices, such as clerks, federal marshals, justices of the peace, and district attorneys. With new Federalist appointments in place, Adams had hoped to solidify the Federalists' control of the judiciary. The Judiciary Act also reduced the number of Supreme Court justices from six to five. (The reduction would take effect upon the death or retirement of one of the sitting justices.) By reducing the number of judges on the Supreme Court, Federalists hoped to minimize the likelihood that Jefferson would appoint a Supreme Court justice during his tenure. Jefferson instructed his secretary of state, James Madison, to withhold any of the new commissions that arrived after he was to be sworn in as president. One of the disappointed judiciary office seekers, William Marbury, sued Madison, seeking a court order to compel Jefferson to turn over his commission. In what would become a landmark in American constitutional law, *Marbury v. Madison* finally decided the case on February 23, 1803, helping to strengthen the powers of the federal judiciary. See *Choices and Consequences: John Marshall's Dilemma*.

Choices and Consequences

JOHN MARSHALL'S DILEMMA

The case of *Marbury v. Madison* pitted President Jefferson against the new Federalist Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall. Jefferson, a champion of states' rights, resented the Federalist-controlled judiciary and, in particular, Marshall, an ardent nationalist who supported a strong central government and a powerful judiciary. *Marbury v. Madison* presented Marshall with a tremendous opportunity to enhance the power of the court, but it also set up the possibility of a serious conflict between the court and the executive branch. Could Marshall compel Jefferson to deliver the commission against his will? What if Jefferson refused the court order? Although Marshall sought to strengthen the power of the court, a direct confrontation with Jefferson might have the opposite effect if Marshall ruled against the president and Jefferson ignored the court's ruling. Marshall had three possible options before him.

Choices



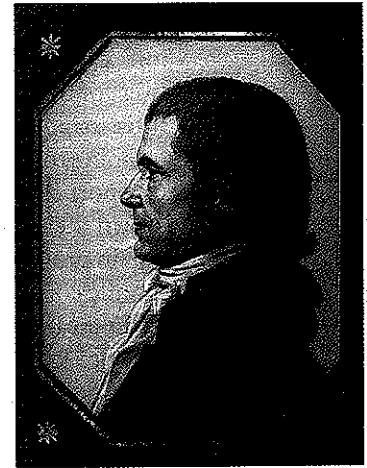
Continuing Controversies

What role should judicial review play in a democracy?

The power of unelected judges to overturn acts of the legislature struck many Americans in Jefferson's day as undemocratic and inconsistent with the notion of representative government. Modern critics still argue that judicial review is undemocratic. Supporters of judicial review argue that the courts serve a necessary *counter-majoritarian* role. By protecting minorities against overbearing majorities, a strong judiciary with the power of judicial review safeguards individual liberty. The controversy that began with *Marbury v. Madison* continues to this day.

Decision

Marshall stated emphatically that Marbury was entitled to the commission. But he asserted just as strongly that he could not order Madison to deliver the commission because the Supreme Court lacked jurisdiction to hear the case. Thus, Marshall used a technical legal issue to avoid a showdown between the executive and the judiciary. To arrive at this result, Marshall declared part of an earlier law, the Judiciary Act of 1789, unconstitutional.



John Marshall

Consequences

Legal scholars usually regard *Marbury v. Madison* as one of the most important and brilliant opinions in Supreme Court history. Marshall gave all the parties in the case a partial victory. By affirming that Marbury was entitled to the commission, Marshall gave Marbury a moral victory, at the same time that he handed Jefferson a practical political victory. His ruling affirmed the concept of judicial review, the notion that courts might overturn acts of the legislature, thus giving the biggest victory to the Supreme Court, whose power was enhanced by his decision.

The Louisiana Purchase

In his first Inaugural Address, Jefferson described America as a “chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation.” For America to remain a republic of virtuous yeoman farmers and keep alive the ideal of an “empire of liberty,” the nation, he argued, would have to expand westward. Jefferson’s vision of an expanding empire of liberty, however, had little room for African Americans or Indians. The first test of the limits of this vision, especially of his concept of liberty, became apparent in Jefferson’s response to news of Gabriel’s Rebellion, the slave uprising in Richmond, Virginia, in 1800 (see Chapter 6). The uprising prompted much soul-searching on the part of white Virginians, including a proposal to emancipate slaves and settle them on Western lands. Virginia’s Governor James Monroe took this proposal seriously and sought the president’s advice about the prospects of implementing such a bold solution to the problem of slavery. Jefferson opposed the plan, however, because he viewed such lands as vital to America’s future. He did not wish to see land that could go to whites and help preserve his vision of a yeoman republic set aside for the use of blacks.

The West was absolutely essential to Jefferson’s future vision of the nation. By the time he took office, more than half a million Americans lived west of the Appalachian Mountains; access to the Mississippi River had become crucial to their economic prosperity. Agricultural produce destined for the port of New Orleans traveled on large flat boats down the Mississippi. Pinckney’s Treaty (1795) with Spain provided navigation rights to this vital economic corridor. When the Spanish ceded Louisiana to France; they also turned over control of the Mississippi River to Napoleon Bonaparte, the country’s ambitious military ruler. Napoleon’s decision to close the port of New Orleans to American shipping alarmed many in Congress. Some Americans even advocated seizing the city. Preferring a negotiated settlement, Jefferson sent a delegation to France to purchase the port from Napoleon. When they arrived in Paris, America’s diplomatic envoys were astounded to learn that Napoleon was willing to sell the entire territory of Louisiana to the United States.

This offer presented Jefferson with an opportunity to double the size of the United States. The only problem was that the Constitution did not authorize the president to purchase new territory. To fulfill his dream of securing enough

land for the nation to remain a yeoman republic, Jefferson had to abandon his constitutional philosophy of strict construction, which limited the powers of the federal government to those expressly delegated by the Constitution. Although Jefferson

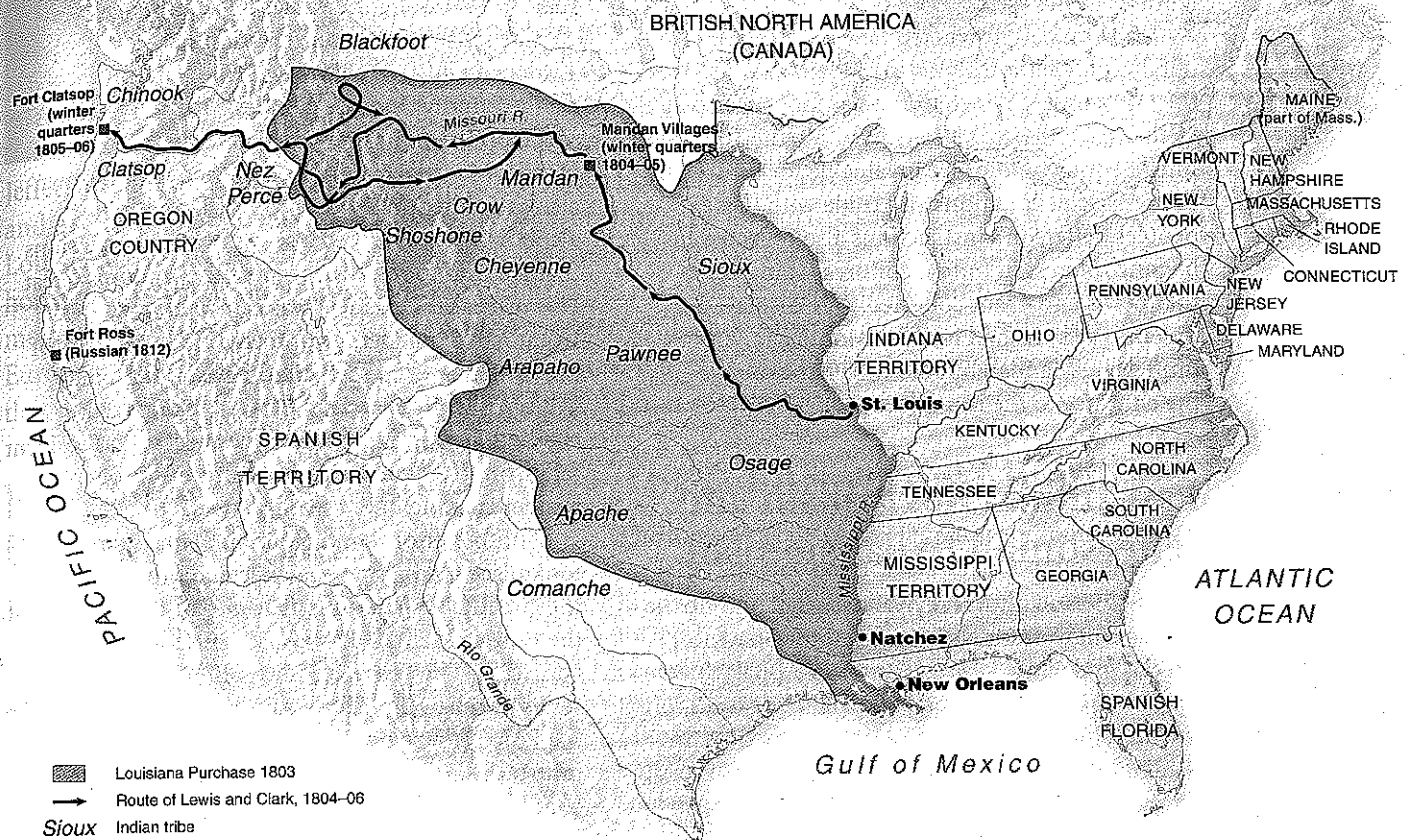
“There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce and contain more than half our inhabitants.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1802

contemplated amending the Constitution to enable such a purchase, he feared that Napoleon might withdraw his offer before such an amendment could be ratified. To help realize his vision of a yeoman nation, Jefferson abandoned his constitutional ideals. With the **Louisiana Purchase**, the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, thereby securing control of the Mississippi River and virtually doubling the size of the new nation (7.5).

Lewis and Clark

In January 1803, six months before news of the purchase of Louisiana, Jefferson had requested funds from Congress for an expedition to explore and map the Western parts of the continent. Meriwether Lewis, Jefferson’s private secretary, headed the expedition. Lewis invited Captain William Clark, an experienced army officer with extensive experience in mapmaking, to join him in commanding a “Corps of volunteers for North



7.5 Louisiana Purchase

Jefferson acquired approximately 827,000 square miles of Western territory, doubling the size of the United States. One of the primary goals of the Lewis and Clark expedition was to map this region.

Western Discovery.” Beginning their heroic trek westward in the frontier town of St. Louis, forty-eight explorers set out on keelboats, long narrow boats that could carry as much as 10 tons of supplies. The expedition traveled up the Missouri River. Progress was slow and in some cases the explorers had to wade along the bank to pull the boats forward by ropes. Still, if all went well they were able to travel 14 miles on a good day.

The purchase of Louisiana added a new element to Lewis and Clark’s mission. In addition to gathering information about native plants, animals, and geography, Lewis was charged with negotiating with Indian Tribes commercial treaties and informing the European and American traders inhabiting the Louisiana Territory that they were no longer subject to French law, but were now subject to the laws of the

United States. Lewis and Clark helped establish official relations with the Indian peoples they encountered.

The mission also included a French interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, and his Shoshoni wife, Sacagawea, who served the corps ably as a translator. In addition, her presence signaled the Indians that this group of armed men was not a war party. The inclusion of Sacagawea and her young child—neither being perceived as a warrior—thus helped the Corps of Discovery to avoid conflict. Clark stressed the importance of this when he wrote in his journal, “a woman with a party of men is a token of peace.” Enduring incredible hardship, including temperatures as low as 45 degrees below zero, the Corps of Discovery traversed an immense swathe of territory, almost 4,000 miles. The entire trek took more than two years to complete. The map (7.5)

shows the path Lewis and Clark took in their voyage of discovery. The corps provided invaluable information about geography, biology, and indigenous cultures of the West.

Jefferson had instructed Lewis and Clark to obtain information about the indigenous cultures they encountered, including their languages, traditions, and occupations. While gathering intelligence would prove invaluable for future diplomatic negotiations and trade with these peoples, Jefferson's instructions also reflected his lifelong interest in Indian cultures. Many items that Lewis and Clark collected were displayed in Jefferson's "Indian Hall" at Monticello. An impressive Mandan buffalo robe hangs above the entrance to the room (7.6).

7.6 Jefferson's Indian Hall at Monticello

Jefferson's main entrance hall contained a host of Indian artifacts, including a Mandan buffalo-hide robe (far right). The images painted onto these robes often depicted heroic exploits and battles of the warriors who wore them.

Pan-Indian Revivalism and Jeffersonian Expansionism

In the 1790s a cultural revival occurred among the Iroquois in western New York and the Shawnee, Creeks, and Cherokees on the trans-Appalachian frontier. The revival aimed at revitalizing traditional Indian religious beliefs and cultural practices. In many instances, the revivalists also attacked the European and American practices that had been incorporated into Indian cultures.

One leader in the Indian revival movement was Handsome Lake, who led a revitalization movement among the Seneca of New York beginning in the year 1799. Among the values he championed was abstinence from the consumption of alcohol. Traders during the colonial period had introduced alcohol among Indians peoples, creating a serious social problem for many indigenous communities. Handsome Lake had himself battled with his own alcohol addiction. In addition to abandoning alcohol, he experienced a series of religious visions that led him to revive aspects of the Iroquois Great Law of Peace. This ideal was central to the Great Iroquoian Confederacy, and enjoined members of the confederacy to seek diplomatic, not military, solutions to conflicts. In 1801 Handsome Lake traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with President Jefferson to defend the land claims of his people against encroachment from settlers.

Another effort at religious and cultural revival took place among the Shawnee and other tribes of the Great Lakes region. The leader of this movement, the Prophet Tenskwatawa, also battled with alcohol addiction. The Prophet's ideas also came to him in a series of religious visions. According to these visions the Prophet instructed his people to reject Western influences and return to traditional Indian ways. In contrast to Handsome Lake's evocation of peace, Tenskwatawa adopted a more militant stance. The

Shawnee Prophet joined his brother, the military leader Tecumseh, in organizing rival Indian nations together. This **pan-Indian resistance movement** united six tribes in an effort to repel white encroachments in Ohio and Indiana, thus defending Indian land and culture. Rather than seek peaceful accommodation with the United States, this movement resolved to defend Indian lands by force.



What were the central beliefs of Handsome Lake's religious revival?

Dissension at Home



In 1804 Jefferson easily defeated his opponent, the Federalist Charles Pinckney, by a margin of 162 electoral votes to 14 to start a second term as president. The margin of victory in this election was a tribute to the achievements of his first administration, during which he had overseen a peaceful, relatively smooth transition from Federalist to Republican rule.

Jefferson had dismantled parts of the government bureaucracy, overseen a robust economy, and preserved the ideal of a nation of yeoman farmers by acquiring the vast new territory of Louisiana. In contrast to the successes of his first term, however, Jefferson faced challenges at home and abroad that marred his second four years in office. Divisions within the Republican movement plagued Jefferson's second term. Meanwhile, his effort to avoid entanglement in European politics and conflicts would lead him to institute an embargo against foreign trade that proved extremely unpopular in New England and seaport cities.

Jefferson's Attack on the Federalist Judiciary

The final element in the Republican strategy to rein in the Federalist judiciary involved the use of the constitutional power of impeachment to remove two of the most controversial Federalist judges from office. Toward the end of his first term Jefferson scored a victory by removing John Pickering of New Hampshire, a notorious drunk. Although he had clearly been unqualified to hold office, many Jefferson supporters were worried about the use of impeachment as a partisan tool. A number of Republicans doubted that Pickering's deplorable behavior qualified as "high crimes and misdemeanors," the Constitution's criteria for removal from office. Republicans managed to persuade enough members of the Senate to convict Pickering.

Buoyed up by his impressive victory in the election of 1804, Jefferson next turned his attention to Samuel Chase, a federal judge who had used the bench as a pulpit to denounce Jefferson and his ideas by delivering longwinded speeches to federal juries. Although Chase had used his position as a judge to denounce Republican ideas, his partisanship seemed even less likely than drunkenness to meet the high standard set by the Constitution for impeachment. Ardent Republicans argued that impeachment was the only tool to check the excesses of unelected judges. More moderate Republicans and Federalists insisted that an impeachable offense had to be a criminal act; ideological bias and partisanship were simply not impeachable offenses. The Senate failed to convict Chase, and the episode drove a wedge between the radical and moderate wings of Jefferson's coalition.

The Controversial Mr. Burr

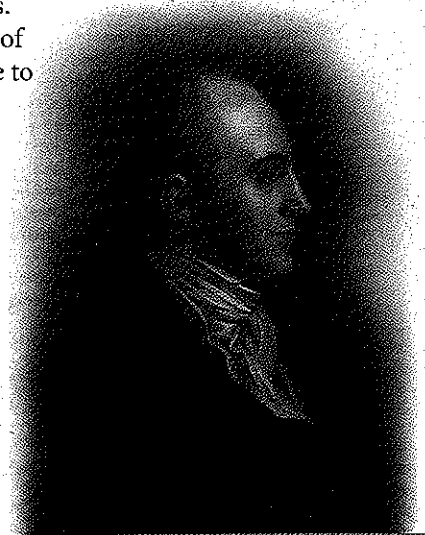
The tragic duel between Hamilton and Burr ended the latter's public political career, but it did not end his political scheming. Burr was soon embroiled in another controversy, this time charged with conspiracy and treason. The exact details of Burr's plot are sketchy, but he appears to have planned to raise a private army and conquer Mexico. Although ample evidence indicates that Burr had been plotting some type of assault on Mexico, the evidence that he intended to invade American territory is less compelling. In any case Burr was one of the more flamboyant personalities of the early Republic, a quality his friend and protégé, painter John Vanderlyn, captured in this portrait of him (7.7).

Jefferson pushed hard to prosecute Burr for treason. Chief Justice John Marshall refused to construe the treason clause in more broad terms, forcing the government to produce two witnesses that could testify to the fact that Burr had waged war against the United States.

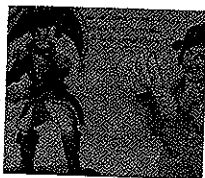
Under this more narrow definition of treason, the prosecution was unable to convict Burr. Marshall's decision to read the treason clause in such narrow terms infuriated Jefferson, who on this occasion seemed to embrace a theory of constitutional interpretation at odds with his own preferred theory of strict construction. Burr went into temporary exile in Europe after the trial but eventually returned to New York to start a lucrative law practice.

7.7 Portrait of Aaron Burr

Artist John Vanderlyn, a protégé of Burr, painted this striking portrait of the controversial politician during Burr's tenure as vice president. [Source: Collection of The New-York Historical Society, Acc. #1931.58]



America Confronts a World at War



In 1803, within two weeks of its sale of Louisiana, France was again at war with Britain. Although Napoleon's armies dominated the European continent, Britain's navy still commanded the seas and defeated the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. During the early phases of the European conflict, American merchants reaped enormous profits by trading with both the French and the British. However, both Britain and France, eager to exert economic pressure on their enemies, set out to blockade the ports of their adversaries. The United States argued that neutral nations had a right to carry on nonmilitary trade with both sides in the conflict, but neither Britain nor France honored this idea. The British navy boarded and searched American ships and seized cargoes without providing any compensation. Even more galling to Americans was the British naval practice of **impressment**, forcing merchant seamen to serve in the British navy. Numerous sailors on American ships had once served in the British navy but now claimed American citizenship. The British navy refused to recognize these claims, arguing that the men were deserters and still subject to British law. Between 1803 and 1812 the British navy abducted and impressed as many as 6,000 Americans.

The tense environment on the high seas reached a crisis in 1807, when the British ship the *Leopard* fired at an American navy ship, the *Chesapeake*. In the skirmish three Americans were killed and eighteen wounded. The British abducted four American sailors whom they charged were deserters from the Royal Navy. People in America's seaport towns clamored for revenge for the **Chesapeake Affair**. Citizens of Norfolk, Virginia, were particularly outraged because the *Chesapeake* had been built in the town's shipyards. Norfolk passed a resolution denouncing this outrageous assault on American liberty and honor. One British diplomat noted that "the lowest order of the Americans are much irritated and inclined for violent measures." Cautious, President Jefferson instructed the governors of the states to be prepared to call up as many as 100,000 militia men to defend the nation if war became inevitable.

The Failure of Peaceable Coercion

Hoping to avoid a military conflict with the British and French, Jefferson proposed a policy of "peaceable coercion," ordering an economic embargo prohibiting trade with Britain and France. "Our commerce," Jefferson wrote, "is so valuable to them, that they will be glad to purchase it, when the only price we ask is to do us justice." The **Embargo Act of 1807** became the cornerstone of Jefferson's plan of "peaceable

coercion." By keeping America's ships out of harm's way and depriving Britain and France of the economic benefits of trade, Jefferson hoped to exert pressure on both sides to respect the rights of neutrals on the high seas. Smugglers widely flouted Jefferson's policy of peaceable coercion, and it proved unpopular in New England and seaport cities, where the policy hit the shipping business hard. American exports fell from \$108 million in 1807 to \$22 million in 1808. To enforce the embargo along the Canadian border, Jefferson had to send in troops, a decision he had decried during the Whiskey Rebellion a decade earlier. Federalists in New England, whose political fortunes had been flagging, now regained their voice, rallying against Jefferson and his "dambargo." As this cartoon (7.8) lampooning Jefferson's efforts to avoid foreign conflict suggests, the embargo did not intimidate Britain or France, but it weakened the American economy.

Madison's Travails: Diplomatic Blunders Abroad and Tensions on the Frontier

The presidential election of 1808 marked the first time that Republicans split over who should lead them. James Madison, who had been Jefferson's closest advisor during the turbulent 1790s, was Jefferson's choice. Quiet, almost scholarly in temperament, Madison had an impressive list

burned the village of Tippecanoe, the center of Tecumseh's pan-Indian movement, to the ground. After this attack Tecumseh entered into a formal alliance with the British, who supplied further arms to the Indians. Confident that their alliance with the British would help defeat American forces, Tecumseh and his allies stepped up attacks on American settlements along the frontier.

The War of 1812

Frustrated by the inability of peaceable coercion to force Britain to respect American rights on the high seas and angered by British support for Tecumseh, Madison began preparations for war. Madison called Congress into an early session in the fall of 1811. Republicans dominated Congress but were divided over the wisdom of going to war against Britain. Many Republicans from the mid-Atlantic, especially New York, were reluctant to endanger their economic fortunes by taking on the most powerful navy in the world. Madison's enemies, particularly those from his home state of Virginia, feared that war would lead to the creation of a large military establishment and new taxes to pay for a war. Madison drew his strongest support from a group of **War Hawks**, young Republican congressmen from the South and Western regions of the country who were intensely nationalistic, resented British attacks on American rights, and favored an aggressive policy of Western expansion into Indian occupied territory. The two leading voices of the War Hawks were Henry Clay, a first term Congressman from Kentucky, and John C. Calhoun, an up-country South Carolinian educated at Yale.

7.9 Columbia Teaches John Bull His New Lesson
Columbia, depicted as the goddess of liberty, stands before other symbols of the new American nation, including an eagle and a shield bearing the stars and stripes of the American flag. She warns France's Napoleon and Britain's John Bull to respect American rights.



The House voted to declare war by a majority of 79 to 49. The margin in the Senate was 19 to 13. No single pattern accounts for all the votes, but popular enthusiasm for the war ran high in many parts of America. Regional, economic, and party identities shaped the final vote. The British blockade had hit the South and the West especially hard. British involvement with Western Native American tribes, particularly in the supply of guns, angered Westerners. Northeastern Republicans who favored war were motivated by anger against this latest threat to American freedom from British tyranny. They saw a struggle that had begun during the Revolution and would not end until America was truly free of British power.

Opposed to war, Federalists viewed the vote as another example of the Republicans' distorted vision of the world. For Federalists, France, not Britain, was America's true enemy. Federalists were unanimously opposed to the war, a position that intensified when they learned that the British had been prepared to yield on the vital question of neutral rights. Anger over Federalist opposition to war led to violence. One Baltimore Federalist newspaper editor who attacked the war was targeted by a mob of angry Republicans, who attacked his office and destroyed his printing press. The attempt by the disgruntled editor to resume printing after the incident triggered a full-scale riot that plunged the city into chaos and was put down only when the militia was called out to quell the riot. The resulting destruction of property and loss of life was the worst instance of public unrest in the young nation's short history and earned Baltimore the nickname "Mob Town" for decades.

News of the reversal in the British position, however, arrived too late for America to change course. America, at President Madison's request, finally declared war, which began in 1812. The war pitted the United States against Great Britain for the second time within less than a half century. As this political cartoon shows (7.9), the primary justification for the **War of 1812** was Britain's violation of American neutrality and seizure of American sailors. In the cartoon, Columbia, the symbol of America, rebukes France and Britain, reminding them that they both must learn to respect free trade and seamen's rights or face retribution. The other issue, British support for Indian attacks on frontier settlements, also galvanized popular support for the war effort, particularly in the West. For a better understanding of the division over entering the war, see *Competing Visions: War Hawks and Their Critics*.

Competing Visions

WAR HAWKS AND THEIR CRITICS

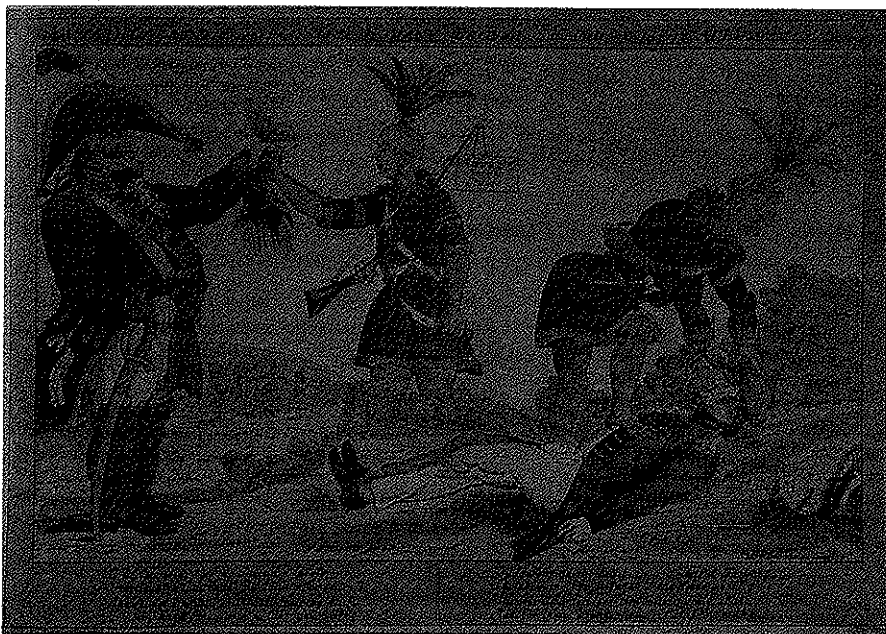
Americans were deeply divided over the War of 1812. One theme that rallied support in the Southwest for the war was Britain's trade relationship with American Indians. Representative Felix Grundy, a prominent War Hawk from Tennessee, charged that the British had instigated Indian violence. Indians killed three of Grundy's brothers in the conflict along the frontier. By contrast, the sharp-tongued, Virginian conservative John Randolph became a vocal critic of the war. Fiercely independent, Randolph dismissed Grundy's suggestion of an Indian-British conspiracy, instead putting the blame for Western conflicts squarely on the settlers who violated Indian land claims. How did Grundy's experiences as a Westerner color his decision to support war? Was Randolph's response likely to attract political support (why or why not)? Why would Randolph opt to frame his opposition in these terms?

In this impassioned speech, Felix Grundy accused the British of arming and inciting American Indians to take up arms against Americans.

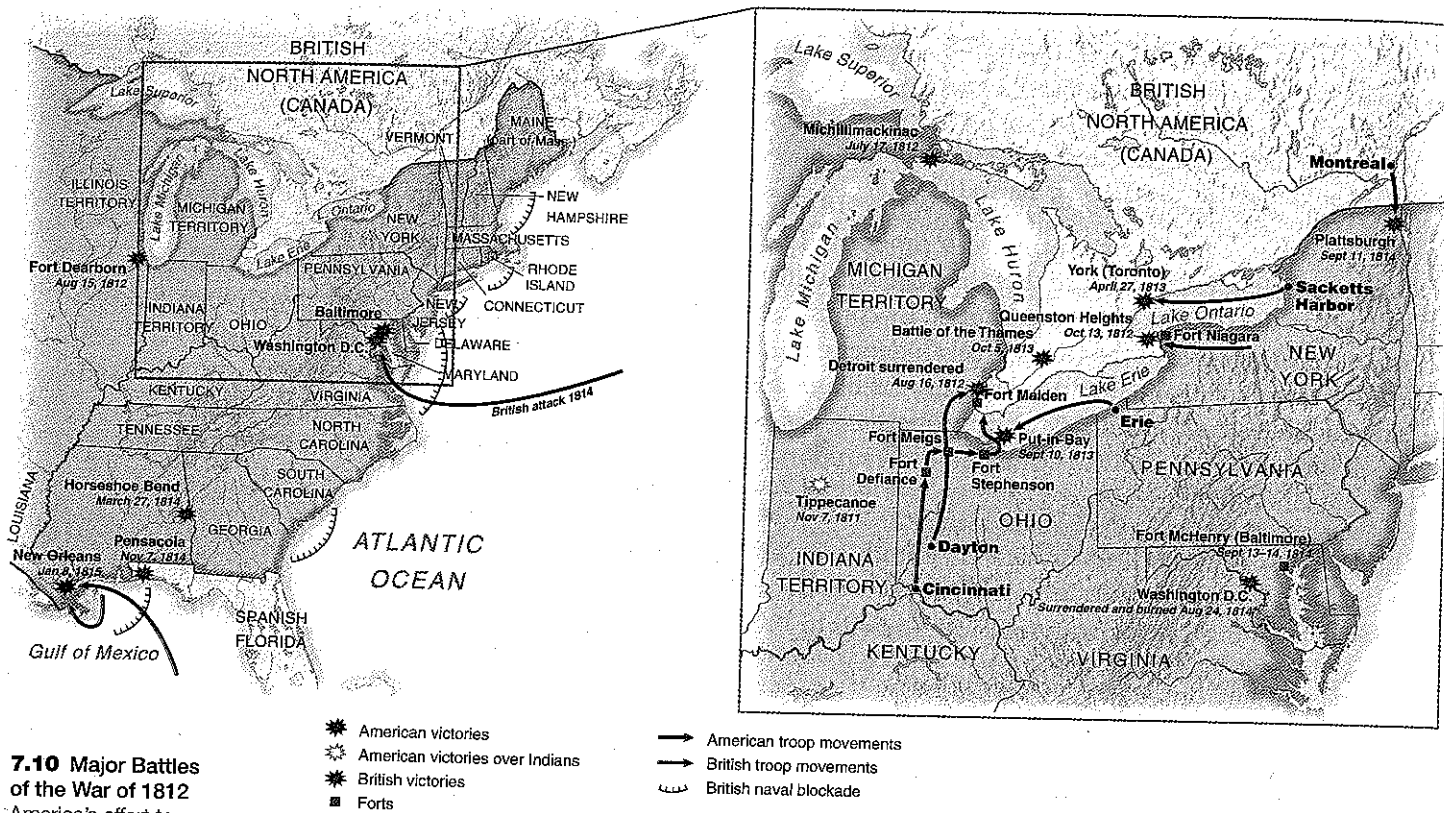
"It cannot be believed, by any man who will reflect, that the savage tribes, uninfluenced by other powers, would think of making war on the United States. They understand too well their own weakness and our strength. They have already felt the weight of our arms; they know they hold the very soil on which they live as tenants in sufferance. How, then, sir are we to account for their late conduct? In one way only; some powerful nation must have intrigued with them, and turned their peaceful dispositions towards us into hostilities. Great Britain alone has intercourse with those Northern Tribes."

John Randolph's response to Grundy dismissed the notion of a conspiracy. The source of conflict along America's frontier, Randolph argued, was the greed of Westerners who encroached on Indian lands.

"He [Randolph] was sorry to say that for this signal calamity and disgrace the House was, in part, at least answerable. Session after session, their table had been piled up with Indian treaties, for which the appropriations has been voted as a matter of course, without examination. Advantage had been taken of the spirit of the Indians, broken by the war which ended in the treaty of Greenville [1795]. Under the ascendancy then acquired over them, they had been pent up by subsequent treaties into nooks, straightened in their quarters by a blind cupidly seeking to extinguish their title to immense wilderness, for which (possessing, as we do already, more land than we can sell or use) we shall not have occasion for half a century to come. It was our own thirst for territory, our own want of moderation, that had driven these sons of nature to desperation."



A Scene on the Frontiers as Practiced by the "Humane" British and Their "Worthy" Allies



7.10 Major Battles of the War of 1812
 America's effort to seize Canada failed, but some of the fiercest fighting occurred along this northern frontier.

Rather than take on Britain on the high seas, the American war effort concentrated on Canada (7.10). Attacking the British in Canada appealed to the War Hawks for several reasons. Canada was poorly defended, and Americans mistakenly believed that the province of Quebec's large French-speaking population, with little love for Britain, would eagerly join Americans to expel the British from Canada. An attack on Canada would also deprive Tecumseh of his primary source of arms. Given the power of the British Empire, particularly its naval superiority, the focus on conquering Canada, or at least holding it hostage to force Britain to respect neutral rights on the high seas, seemed a promising strategy.

American efforts to wrest Canada from Britain, however, failed miserably as British troops beat back incursions into Canada along the U.S. border. The British also waged a successful campaign in harassing America's coastal settlements. In the most audacious move of the war, in the summer of 1814, the British attacked Washington, D.C., and burned the capital. The British assault on Washington forced President Madison and his wife Dolley to flee their home. When the British troops finally arrived on the

scene, they feasted on an elegant dinner that had been set out for the president and his wife. They took many items from the house, including Madison's personal medicine chest, which the British government returned 125 years later to President Franklin Roosevelt.

The British next attacked Fort McHenry in Baltimore harbor. An eyewitness to the attack, Francis Scott Key, composed a patriotic poem, "The Star Spangled Banner," that became America's national anthem in the 1930s. Although the American navy failed to challenge the British in the Atlantic, it did score impressive victories against the British on the Great Lakes, at Put-in-Bay and at Niagara Falls. While diplomatic efforts to end the war intensified, the British launched an assault on New Orleans. Andrew Jackson, the American leader at New Orleans, commanded a mixture of regular troops, militia, free blacks, and a small body of Indians. Although he had been reluctant at first, Jackson even accepted help from a band of French pirates. As a result of his victory, Jackson became the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. His accomplishments were celebrated in ballads such as the *Hunters of Kentucky*, "Old

**“Nothing was adjusted,
nothing was settled—nothing
in substance but an indefinite
suspension of hostilities
was agreed to.”**

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, describing the
Treaty of Ghent (1815)

Hickory” (Jackson’s nickname) became a symbol of steadfastness and bravery. Newspapers across the nation proclaimed the victory a symbol of the “Rising Glory of the American Republic.”

Neither side in this Battle was aware that a peace treaty had already been signed between the two nations. It took two weeks for word of peace to reach Louisiana, arriving after the battle was concluded. The Treaty of Ghent in 1814, named for the city in Belgium where the negotiations were conducted, ended the fighting but failed to resolve the longstanding issues that had divided the two nations. Indeed, if judged by the terms of the peace treaty negotiated in Ghent, the War of 1812 accomplished little. The diplomatic issues at stake at the beginning of the war, including impressments of American sailors and the rights of neutral trade, remained unresolved. In private, some Americans, including John Quincy Adams, one of the diplomats who helped negotiate the treaty, felt it did little but end hostilities. The American public generally regarded the war as a victory, some calling it the Second War for Independence. At least America had defended the nation’s honor against Britain, forcing the most powerful nation in the world to treat the new nation with respect, a perception reflected in this symbolic painting celebrating the treaty (7.11); America, represented by the goddess of liberty, reaches out the hand of friendship to Britannia, symbol of Great Britain.

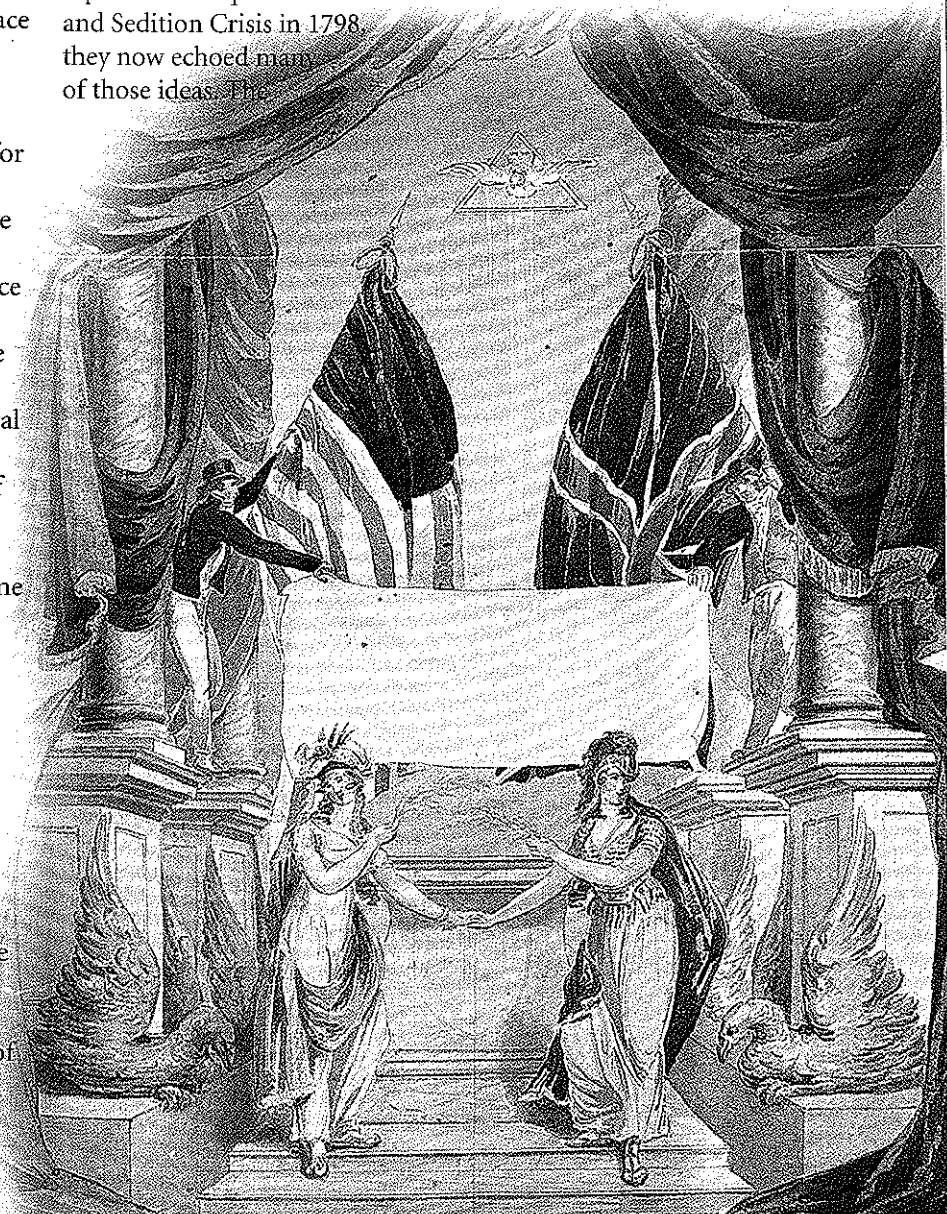
While the British and Americans had fought to a draw, the most conspicuous losers in the war were the Indians living along the frontier, who lost an important ally and were forced to make a number of major land concessions to Americans. The goal of pan-Indian nationalists such as Tecumseh suffered a severe set back at the hands of William Henry

Harrison and Andrew Jackson, whose military successes secured the trans-Appalachian frontier, the Western territory beyond the Appalachian Mountains, for settlement.

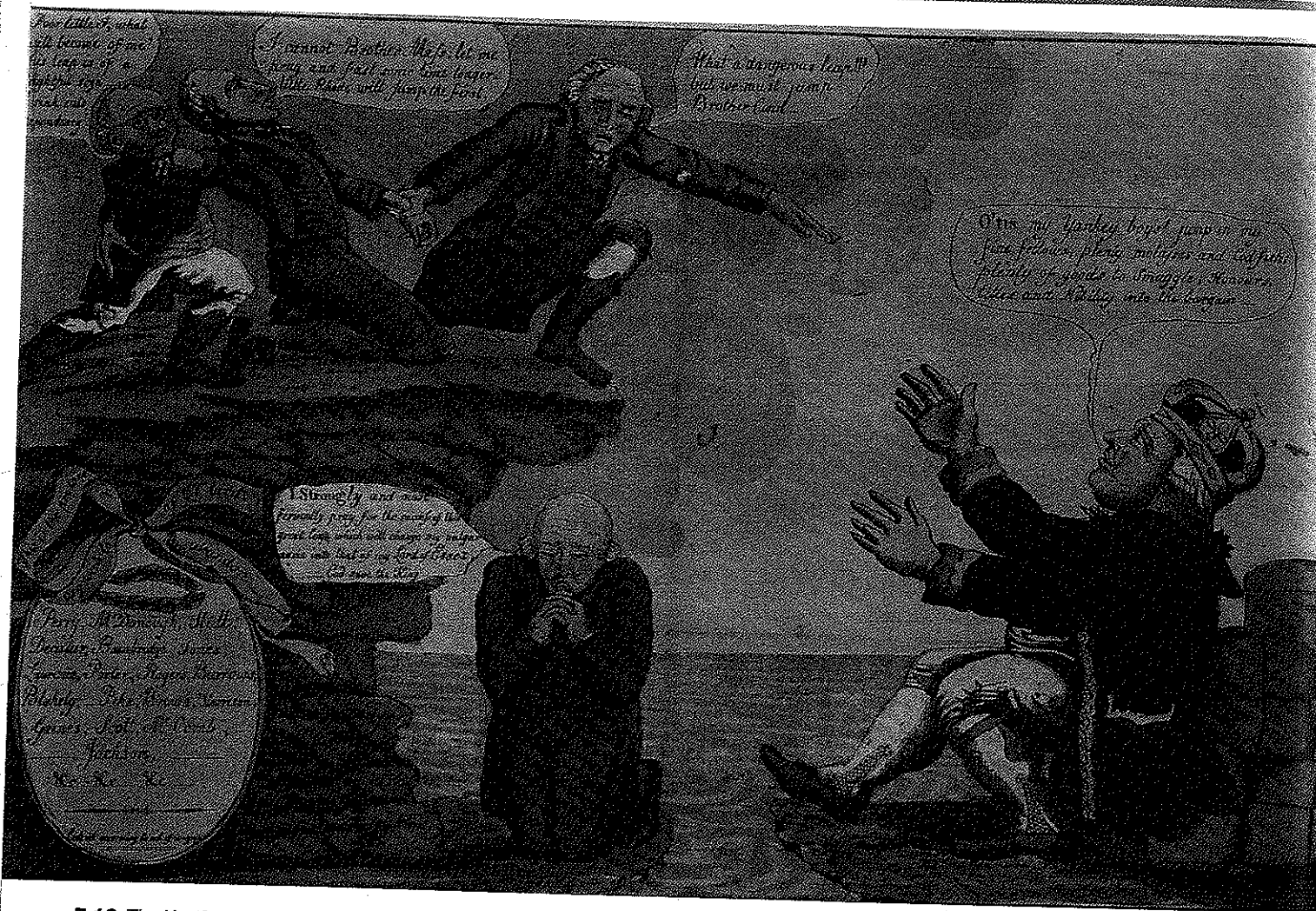
The Hartford Convention

While many Americans celebrated Jackson’s victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans, Federalists in New England convened at the **Hartford Convention** in Hartford, Connecticut, to protest the War of 1812. While some Federalists in New England had flirted with the idea of secession, the delegates to the Hartford Convention stopped well short of advocating the breakup of the Union. Although New England Federalists had denounced the radical states’ rights ideas that Jeffersonians had espoused in response to the Alien and Sedition Crisis in 1798, they now echoed many of those ideas. The

7.11 Treaty of Ghent
In this representation of the peace accord worked out between America and Britain at Ghent, Belgium, Columbia and Britannia hold hands. Two sailors unfurl the flags of their nations, proclaiming a new era of harmony.



What were the main goals of the Hartford Convention?



7.12 The Hartford Convention or Leap, No Leap

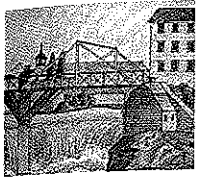
In this cartoon George III beckons to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island to jump off the cliff and join him, promising them “titles, nobility,” and other rewards for abandoning their fellow states.

convention delegates proposed a series of constitutional amendments that would strengthen New England’s influence in the Union. In particular, they sought to require a two-thirds majority for commercial regulations, declarations of war, and the admission of new states. To weaken the South’s influence in Congress, the Hartford Convention also called for a repeal of the three-fifths compromise, which allowed Southerners to count a percentage of their slaves for the purposes of determining a state’s representation in the House. The Hartford Convention’s proposals were publicized at the same time as news of the Treaty of Ghent and

America’s impressive victory at the Battle of New Orleans were fueling a new sense of national pride. In this political cartoon ridiculing the Hartford Convention (7.12), leading New England Federalists appear ready to leap off a cliff into the welcoming arms of Britain’s king. Federalists’ narrow sectionalism appeared out of step with the public’s new patriotic fervor. Even in their New England strong-hold, Federalists saw themselves irreparably damaged as a movement. The War of 1812 facilitated the demise of the Federalists as a viable political organization.

How are the actions of New England states represented in the political cartoon on the Hartford Convention above?

The Republic Reborn: Consequences of the War of 1812



The War of 1812 transformed America, its politics, economy, society, and relations with other nations. The postwar era inaugurated a period of nationalism that was evidenced in diplomacy, economic policy, and law. There was broad popular support for a stronger central government, one capable of dealing with foreign challenges and spurring domestic economic growth.

Thus the partisan squabbling of the Jeffersonian era gave way as the necessities of fighting a war forced leading politicians to unite the best aspects of Jeffersonian politics with Hamiltonian economics. John Quincy Adams, the talented secretary of state under James Monroe, proved to be an effective diplomat, skillfully negotiating a number of important treaties for the United States. The demands of the wartime economy not only spurred economic and technological innovation but also increased demand for manufactured goods, such as firearms and textiles for uniforms. The new nationalist ethos and a more sympathetic attitude toward economic development were evidenced in the decisions of the Supreme Court after the war.

The National Republican Vision of James Monroe

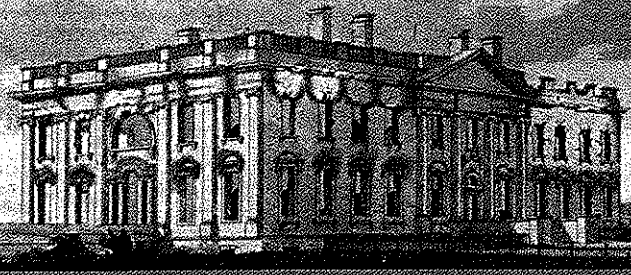
The experience of war radically transformed Republican political and constitutional ideas. In his annual message to Congress in 1815, the first after the Treaty of Ghent, Madison suggested that the nation expand the size of its military and reaffirmed his support for a national bank and for protective tariffs for American industry. Seeking to push beyond this nationalist agenda, Madison floated the idea of chartering a national university and even considered amending the Constitution to give the federal government the power to promote internal improvements such as roads and canals. Madison did cling to one traditional republican idea. He believed that to exercise such powers required a constitutional amendment granting the federal government the power to achieve these objectives. Although on this one point of constitutional theory Madison reasserted the traditional Republican view of the limited scope of federal power, as a practical matter he had aligned himself with much of the old Hamiltonian agenda. Indeed, John Quincy Adams, son of the former president and a staunch Federalist, believed that Madison and “the Republicans had out-Federalized Federalism.”

The collapse of Federalists in the aftermath of the War of 1812 led to a shift away from the rancor that had characterized politics during the Jeffersonian era. Following Madison as president, James Monroe sought to unite the political ideals of Jeffersonianism

with aspects of Hamiltonian economic theory. For a brief period he managed to create an administration free of the partisan divisions that had characterized American politics since Washington’s second term. As a gesture toward nonpartisan politics, the Republican Monroe named the brilliant Federalist John Quincy Adams as his secretary of state. Monroe also appointed individuals from different regions, an effort to heal old sectional tensions. In addition, Monroe took a lesson from Washington, the other president who seemed most successful at rising above party, and embarked on a goodwill tour of the nation. Monroe began his tour in Boston, a city with strong Federalist sympathies. Praising Monroe’s gesture, a Boston newspaper proclaimed a new **Era of Good Feelings** to describe the absence of bitter partisan conflict during Monroe’s presidency. Monroe also enjoyed some successes in restoring luster to the office of the presidency. He became noted for his stylish mode of entertaining in the executive mansion. To repair the extensive smoke damage to the executive mansion (7.13), a result of the British attack on Washington during the War of 1812, Monroe had the house painted a brilliant white. The official residence of the President of the United States has been known as the White House ever since.

7.13 A View of the President's House in the City of Washington after the Conflagration of the 24th of August, 1814

Repairs to the damaged executive mansion included a new coat of white paint. Afterwards, the residence became known as “the White House.”



7.14 Portrait of President James Monroe

This image of Monroe captures his role as a transitional figure between the eighteenth century world of the Founders and a new era in American politics. He appears without the wigs favored by eighteenth-century gentlemen, but his silk stockings and knee breeches reflected the values of the founding generation.

Monroe not only sought to reconcile Federalist and Jeffersonian ideals but he also served as a bridge between the political cultures of two different centuries, the eighteenth and the nineteenth. Monroe was the last president with ties to the founding generation that fought the Revolution and wrote the Constitution. Monroe's roots in the eighteenth century appear in the clothes he wore at his inauguration. Most men by now had abandoned their wigs and replaced breeches and silk stockings with more modern trousers. But Monroe retained the ideals and dress of eighteenth-century gentility. In this portrait, he wears breeches and silk stockings (7.14). If Monroe's personal style and values harked back to the eighteenth century, many of his policies as president reflected newer ideas espoused by such young and up and coming leaders as the nationalist War Hawk John C. Calhoun. Monroe endorsed Calhoun's plan for internal improvements, including roads and canals, which together would create "a domestic market" encouraging "an active intercourse between the extremes and throughout every portion of our Union." One aging Federalist remarked that "the Party in Power seems disposed to do all that federal men ever wished."

Another portrait of Monroe was painted by Samuel Morse, then a young painter but later to be known as the inventor of the telegraph.

While in Washington to paint Monroe, Morse also began to paint a picture of the newly refurbished chamber of the House of Representatives, which, like the White House, the British had damaged during the War of 1812. In this painting, Morse took the opportunity to represent American nationalism and present a vision of politics consistent with Monroe's idea of republican ideals. For more on Morse's work and his representation of Monroe's political vision, see *Images as History: Samuel*

Morse's House of Representatives and the National Republican Vision.

Diplomatic Triumphs

After the war, John Quincy Adams, Monroe's secretary of state, took an active role in resolving several outstanding border disputes with Britain. In the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817, the United States and Britain agreed to limit naval armaments on the Great Lakes. An accord reached the following year set the new boundary between the Louisiana Territory and Canada at the 49th parallel. In this same accord, the British also recognized American fishing rights off Labrador and Newfoundland, and America and Britain agreed to continue to occupy jointly the Oregon Territory in the Pacific Northwest. These diplomatic successes effectively normalized U.S.-Canadian relations and created a peaceful border between the two countries that has persisted for more than two hundred years.

With a successful resolution of America's northern border disputes with Britain, Adams was now free to address America's southern boundary disputes with Spain. For several decades America had been eager to wrest Florida from Spain. In March 1818 General Andrew Jackson led a raid into Spanish Florida to attack the Seminoles. Under the pretext of protecting American frontier settlements against future Indian attack, Jackson mounted a major offensive against Spanish Florida and captured two Spanish forts, thereby further weakening Spain's bargaining position. Rather than risk war, Spain resolved to abandon Florida. In the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, Spain ceded all claims to Florida and formally recognized U.S. sovereignty in Louisiana.

Spain's empire in the Americas had been crumbling for two decades. In 1811 Paraguay and Venezuela each declared independence from Spain. In 1818 Chile declared its independence, while Peru followed suit in 1821. Building on the goodwill generated by the successful diplomatic resolution of the northern boundary issue between the United States and Canada, Britain's foreign minister approached the United States in 1823 with the suggestion that the two nations issue a declaration that neither intended to annex these newly liberated states in Spanish America. While Monroe was tempted to accept the British offer, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams advised against it. Instead, Monroe followed the advice of his brilliant secretary of state. In his annual message to Congress in 1823, he presented a general policy for Spanish America.

Images as History

SAMUEL MORSE'S *HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES* AND THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN VISION

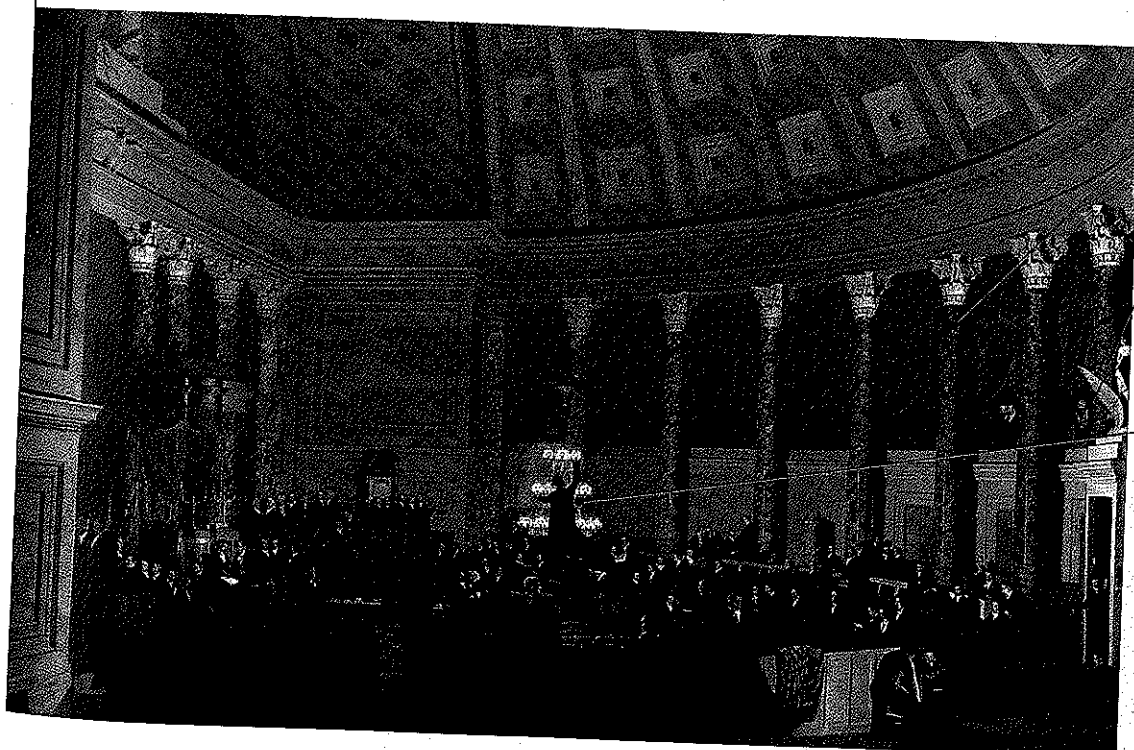
In 1819 Samuel Morse began his ambitious painting of the House of Representatives. The painting not only reflected the political ideas of the Era of Good Feelings, it projected a nationalist vision of America's bright future. How did Morse's emphasis on architectural grandeur convey the values of Monroe and Nationalist Republican belief?

Although the crowded chamber bustles with activity, Morse presented a scene of cordiality and harmony. The painting captures the time before formal political business began, a decision that allowed Morse to create a scene free of conflict or tension.

Morse chose a rare evening session of the House to illustrate. This decision allowed him to further shift the focus away from the actions of politicians. Occupying the dramatic center of the painting is the House of Representative's doorkeeper, who is lighting a large chandelier to illuminate the evening's activities. The painting thus pays tribute to America's technological progress. It links America's political institutions symbolically to light and progress.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the architect responsible for rebuilding the Capitol after the War of 1812, chose multicolored stones for the columns supporting the roof of the House. This particular architectural element became a visual symbol of the idea of federalism, in which the different states, represented by the stones, blended together in a single harmonious republican structure, a classical column.

A number of distinguished guests are in the House chamber, including the entire Supreme Court, and a number of guests occupy the gallery. The inclusion of the Pawnee chief, Petalesharo, signifies America's inevitable subjugation of Indians. Morse's painting idealizes a brief moment in American politics that was already on the wane by the time his painting was displayed. Monroe's vision of a National Republican consensus and the "era of good feelings" was being supplanted by rising sectional tensions over slavery and a new era of partisan conflict.



Morse highlighted the multicolored stone columns, which symbolized the ideal of federalism.

The Indian figure in the gallery symbolized Monroe's diplomatic achievements and the inevitable subjugation of America's indigenous population.

Morse focused on the act of lighting the House's impressive chandelier, a symbol of American progress.

Samuel Morse's *The Old House of Representatives*
[Source: Samuel F. B. Morse, "The Old House of Representatives": 1822. Oil on Canvas. 86 1/2 x 130 3/4. Museum Purchase, Gallery Fund, Corcoran Gallery of Art]

Why did Morse highlight architecture and minimize the people in his painting?

This statement, the **Monroe Doctrine**, reiterated the policy outlined in Washington's Farewell Address that America would not meddle in European affairs and expanded upon this policy by warning European powers that the United States would view European intervention in the affairs of any of the newly independent republics of Spanish Americas as a threat to U.S. security.

Economic and Technological Innovation

The War of 1812 not only led to a renewed political commitment to economic development but also spurred a remarkable period of technological development. America's embargo against foreign goods and the demands of the wartime economy provided incentives for economic innovation. Firearms production was improved, steam engines powered new modes of transportation, and new agricultural technology led to a boom in cotton production.

Not surprisingly the war spurred innovation in the production of firearms. The federal arsenals at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia, played a pivotal role in advancing these developments. Indeed, within a decade of the end of the war, Harper's Ferry had pioneered a mass production technique for manufacturing firearms. In place of older artisan methods, in which master craftsmen handcrafted items for production, the system used new power machinery to cut and shape standardized parts. By 1820, John H. Hall had perfected the manufacturing techniques for "fabricating arms exactly alike and with economy by the hands of common workmen." Hall

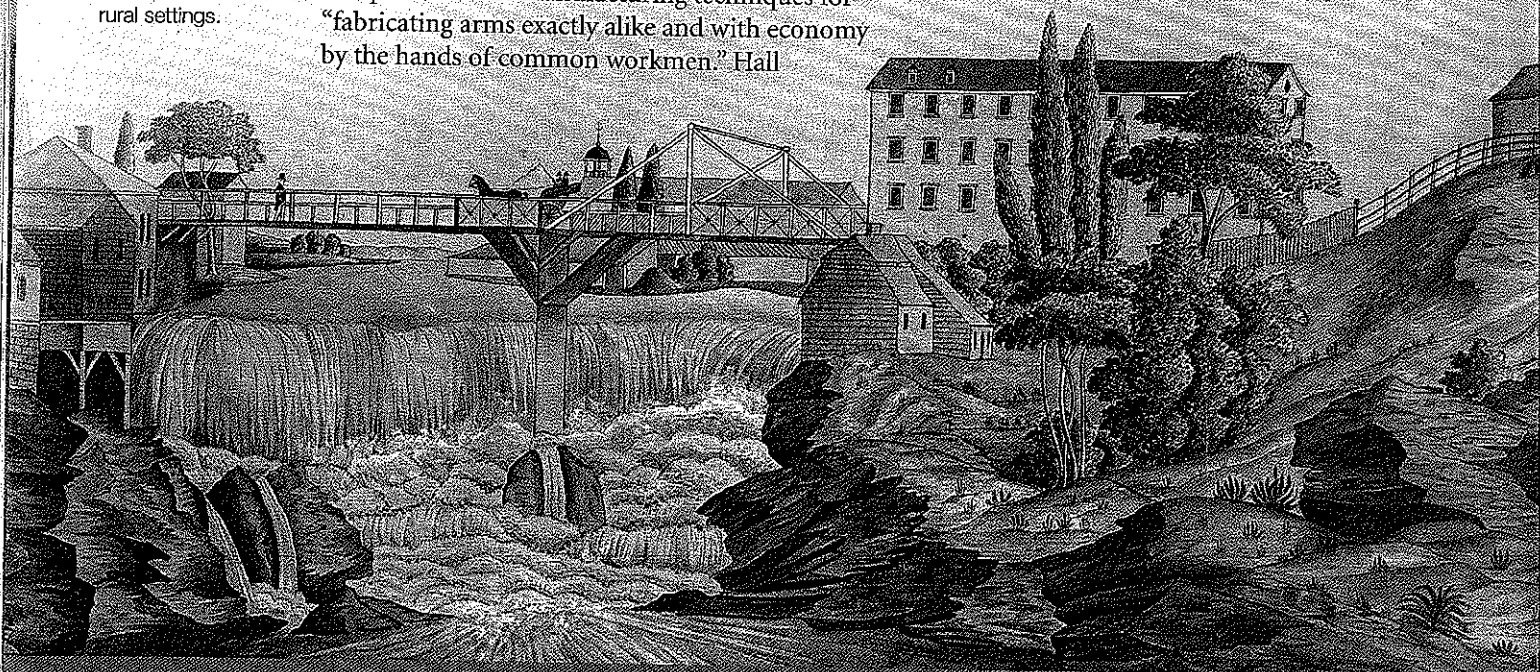
began producing a new breech loading rifle, an improvement over the traditional muzzle loading muskets.

A simple, but far-reaching technological improvement in agricultural production transformed the American economy. The **cotton gin**, an invention by Eli Whitney, an industrious Connecticut Yankee working as a tutor on a Southern plantation, devised a means for removing the seeds that adhered tenaciously to short staple cotton, a hearty variety of plant well suited to Southern climate and soil. Whitney's cotton gin revolutionized cotton agriculture. Before Whitney's invention, an adult slave needed a whole day to clean a single pound of cotton. Whitney's cotton gin allowed a single slave to clean 50 pounds of cotton in a single day. In 1790 the South produced 3,000 bales of cotton. By 1810 the cotton gin facilitated the production of 178,000 bales. Immediately after the War of 1812, cotton production almost doubled again to 334,000 bales. Cotton agriculture would provide huge new economic incentives for slave-based agriculture by making it much cheaper to produce cotton for market.

Although cotton exports to England consumed a high percentage of this new cash crop, some of the cotton produced was purchased for use in domestic textile manufacturing. In 1793 Samuel Slater established a mechanized spinning factory in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Slater's mill was a relatively modest structure whose size and architectural style fit the scale of a small New England village. The first mills depended on water power and took advantage of natural falls to power water wheels (7.15). Slater

7.15 Slater's Mill

The earliest factories were not imposing structures belching forth smoke, but small water-powered mill factories. Slater's first water-powered mill resembled the clapboard rural structures that had been used to grind grain or saw logs and that easily blended into their rural settings.



What was the economic significance of Whitney's cotton gin?

pioneered the mill village model of industrial production. Eventually others followed Slater's model, adapting it by creating entirely new mill villages. In these mill villages, the company owned the adjacent farmland and rented it to men whose families worked in the mills. This Rhode Island or "family" model of the mill village was the first successful model of sustained capitalist economic development in manufacturing.

Judicial Nationalism

No figure captured the new nationalist spirit of the nation more fully than the young Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story. A brilliant lawyer, Story was only thirty-two when James Madison appointed him to the Court. Story, an anti-embargo Republican from Massachusetts, was appointed by Madison who hoped the new justice would check the nationalism of Chief Justice John Marshall. Madison would not be the first president to be shocked and disappointed by the behavior of one of his Supreme Court appointments. Story proved to be as nationalistic as Marshall. Story's decisions on the court supported the power of the federal judiciary and limited the power of the states. In a series of landmark decisions, Marshall and Story helped strengthen the power of the federal government and the courts and paved the way of economic growth.

The most famous case dealing with the issues of federalism that came before the court was *McCulloch v. Maryland*. The case arose when the state of Maryland levied a tax on the Baltimore branch of the Second Bank of the United States. Most Republicans had made their peace with the idea of a bank, but some continued to harbor resentment against this highly visible symbol of Hamiltonian federalism. Marshall declared the Maryland state tax unconstitutional and affirmed an essentially Hamiltonian view of the powers of the federal government. According to Marshall the federal government enjoyed broad powers under the "necessary and proper" clauses of the Constitution, which allowed it to charter a bank. Marshall further argued that the power to tax was also the power to destroy and allowing the state to tax a federally chartered institution would have allowed the state of Maryland to undermine an act of the federal government. While Marshall conceded that the powers of the federal government were not unlimited, he affirmed that within its sphere of authority it enjoyed enormous latitude to accomplish any legitimate constitutional objective. In

contrast to many Republicans who accepted the Jeffersonian idea that individual states could judge the constitutionality of federal acts, the Marshall Court insisted that it was the sole prerogative of the Supreme Court to determine when the federal government had exceeded its authority.

No other decision rendered by the Supreme Court generated so much controversy as that of *McCulloch v. Maryland*. For some radical opponents of the Marshall Court, *McCulloch* seemed to bring the Anti-Federalists' most dire predictions to pass. Anger over *McCulloch* led many Republicans, particularly in the South, to develop a more aggressive version of the doctrine of states' rights. These Republicans challenged the authority of the Supreme Court to decide arguments about the balance of power between the states and the federal government. For nationalists such as Marshall and Story, however, the creation of a more powerful central government was essential to the survival of American government.

"The present moment is every way favorable to the establishment of a great national policy and of great national institutions, in respect to the army, the navy, the judicial, [and] the commercial ... interests of the country."

Justice JOSEPH STORY [1816–1820?]

The Marshall Court also decided a number of cases dealing with the law and the economy. One of the most important cases dealing with economic development also greatly expanded the scope of federal power over commerce. In *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), a case involving steamboats, the court grappled with the scope of federal powers over interstate commerce. In that case Marshall construed the word *commerce* broadly to encompass "every species of commercial intercourse." The court also held that federal power over interstate commerce did not end at the borders of each state, but extended to within states when that commerce was intermingled with economic activity that crossed state lines. Although in the nineteenth century the federal government did not exploit its power over interstate commerce to the fullest, the power to regulate interstate commerce is currently one of the most far-reaching possessed by the federal government.

Crises and the Collapse of the National Republican Consensus



The patriotic sentiments stirred by the War of 1812 and the emergence of a new consensus around a Hamiltonian economic vision contributed to a period of prosperity and optimism. The new consensus, however, proved fragile, and a severe depression soon followed the economic boom of the postwar period. The issue of slavery also vaulted to national attention when Missouri sought admission to the Union as a slave state. The hope that Monroe's creative synthesis of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian visions might usher in a new Era of Good Feelings proved short lived as economic and political crises once again divided the nation.

The Panic of 1819

The surge in demand for cotton boosted the American economy. Economic expansion, in part driven by cotton, led to a growth in the financial sector of the American economy. States began chartering new banks so that the number of banks doubled in the period from 1815 to 1818, from just over 200 to more than twice that number. In 1816 Congress chartered a Second Bank of the United States, which further fueled economic expansion and land speculation. Because of the combined efforts of the state banks and the Second Bank of the United States, land sales in the brief period between 1815 and 1818 more than tripled.

However the dip in the price of cotton and other agricultural products exported by America dropped in 1819, creating a ripple effect that led to a severe economic downturn that affected nearly every aspect of the American economy. Since much of the expansion in credit by American banks was tied to agricultural production, the crisis spread to America's financial institutions. The value of land purchased on credit dropped sharply, and when these loans came due, speculators were unable to repay the banks that had loaned them the money to purchase these properties. The American economy, now heavily dependent on cotton, sank into depression. As speculators increasingly defaulted on their obligations, one bank after another collapsed. The economic crisis affected nearly every region of the country. The **Panic of 1819**, the economic crisis triggered by the drop in agricultural prices and bank failures, produced economic hardship on an unprecedented scale. While the sudden downturn in the economy hurt Western land speculators and cotton producers in the Deep South, it also devastated the

growing urban centers of the Northeast that were also hard hit. In Philadelphia three out of four workers lost their jobs. In New York the number of people classified as paupers increased from eight thousand to thirteen thousand in a single year.

The Missouri Crisis

The economic downturn in 1819 was soon overshadowed by another crisis. In 1819 Missouri applied for admission to the Union as a slave state. Congressman John Tallmadge from New York demanded that Missouri ban further imports of slaves and make a commitment to eliminate slavery before joining. Public meetings across the Northeast protested Missouri's proposed admission as a slave state. The issue of slavery now came to the center of American politics.

The growth of cotton agriculture and the prospect of large new swathes of territory in the western United States entering the Union as slave states prompted a political crisis. While Northern congressmen denounced slavery as a violation of the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Southerners defended the institution, invoking the language of states' rights developed in 1798 in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions to support the right of the states to decide the slavery question. A Georgia congressman warned that Tallmadge had "kindled a fire which all the waters of the ocean cannot put out, which seas of blood can only extinguish." The New Yorker's amendment passed the House, where the Northeast enjoyed a numerical majority, but was defeated in the Senate, where the North and South were equally balanced.

To avert a constitutional crisis, Congress worked out a compromise. One of the key players



7.16 The Missouri Compromise
The Missouri Compromise established a new policy for dealing with slavery in Western territories. The compromise drew an imaginary line across the map of the United States. Land south of this line would be open to slavery, while territory north of the line would be free.

negotiating this solution was Henry Clay, one of the most influential figures in Congress. The **Missouri Compromise** called for the admission of Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, thus preserving the balance between free states and slave states in the Senate. The Missouri Compromise drew an imaginary line across the territory acquired through the Louisiana Purchase at 36° 30' latitude (7.16). Land below this imaginary dividing line would be slave territory, while land above the line would be free. When he learned of the outcome of the Missouri Compromise, Thomas Jefferson wrote to a friend that the news struck him as a “fire bell in the night.” Being awakened from a sound sleep by a fire alarm, the metaphor chosen by Jefferson evoked the magnitude of the Missouri crisis. For Jefferson the Missouri crisis had etched the issue of slavery onto the map of the United States and would make any resolution of this issue in the future impossible. The debate over Missouri promoted John Quincy Adams to write in his diary that “Slavery is the great and foul stain upon the North American Union.” For the moment, however,

it seemed that most politicians were unwilling to contemplate erasing the great stain on American society.

Denmark Vesey’s Rebellion

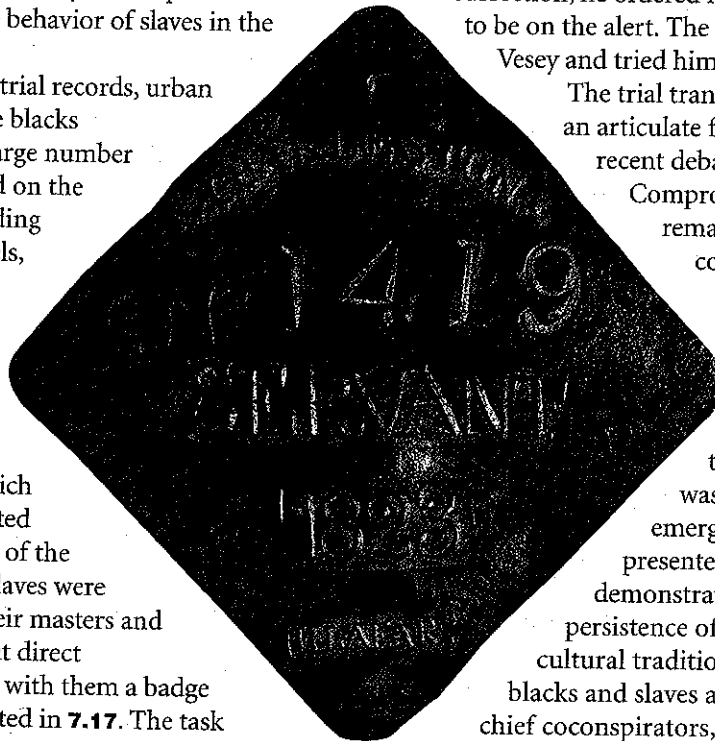
The problem of slavery was once again a subject of national concern in the summer of 1822. Newspapers from Charleston to Boston and as far west as the Illinois Territory carried the sensational story of Denmark Vesey, a free African American artisan from Charleston, South Carolina, who had been arrested, tried, and executed for—so the charges went—leading a slave insurrection.

A talented and charismatic figure, Vesey had obtained his freedom when he won a lottery jackpot in 1799 and used his earnings to purchase his freedom and set up his own small carpentry shop. A natural leader, he became a prominent member of a local African American church that became an important meeting place for African Americans. Rumors of a slave revolt led authorities to arrest him and charge him with plotting an insurrection, the

so-called **Denmark Vesey Uprising**, said to have been aimed to free slaves in Charleston by violence. Modern historians differ over how to interpret the evidence compiled by officials in Charleston that was used to convict Vesey and his alleged followers. The court's proceedings occurred in secrecy, and the trial transcript was apparently produced after the fact. Given the lack of corroborating evidence, some historians reject the idea that Vesey was a revolutionary figure bent on leading an uprising and see him instead as an unfortunate victim, a vocal free black leader who became a scapegoat for paranoid Charleston whites ever fearful of slave insurrection. Others believe that there was a plot, although the scope of it remains uncertain. Whether the proposed insurrection was real or simply imagined, the evidence gathered to convict Vesey provides a window into both the way whites perceived slave culture and the behavior of slaves in the Charleston region.

7.17 Slave Badge
Badges such as this one were carried by slaves in Charleston when they were hired out to other employers.

According to the trial records, urban slaves and urban free blacks conspired with the large number of slaves who worked on the plantations surrounding Charleston. The rebels, the records suggest, were poised to take advantage of the mobility enjoyed by African Americans in this region, an area in which travel was less restricted than in other regions of the South. Charleston's slaves were often hired out by their masters and often traveled without direct supervision, carrying with them a badge such as the one depicted in **7.17**. The task system employed by Carolina plantation owners also provided slaves with considerable autonomy and some mobility. After finishing their day's tasks, slaves were allowed to work their own plots of land, hunt, or fish. Slaves not only used this surplus food to supplement their meager rations but also often brought this food to Charleston's markets for sale. The ease of travel greatly facilitated communication between slaves and freedmen. Free black churches provided places for African Americans, slaves and free blacks, to meet and discuss ideas, including perhaps revolution. The prosecution



claimed that Vesey, an active member of Charleston's African-Methodist Episcopal Church, had used the church as a place to recruit others to his cause. The alleged insurrection was planned for the summer, when many whites left the city for cooler climates.

If Vesey's plan was real and not invented by his prosecutors, his conception was a bold one. After seizing the city arsenal, Vesey and his followers allegedly planned to burn the city and set sail for Haiti. (In 1804 Saint Domingue became the republic of Haiti.) The Caribbean island's own revolutionary experience might have provided an inspirational symbol for Vesey, who saw the uprising as a model for toppling the institution of slavery in America. Haiti therefore provided both a model and a potential haven for Vesey and his followers. When South Carolina's governor heard about the planned insurrection, he ordered five companies of militia to be on the alert. The authorities arrested Vesey and tried him.

The trial transcript portrays Vesey as an articulate figure well aware of the recent debates over the Missouri Compromise, including the remarks of antislavery congressmen from New England. He had also pointed to the rise of abolitionist sentiment in the North as a sign that the time for revolution was ripe. The plot that emerges from the evidence presented at the trial also demonstrates the continuing persistence of African religious and cultural traditions preserved by free blacks and slaves alike. One of Vesey's chief conspirators, for example, a slave named Gullah Jack, had a reputation as a conjurer who would provide Vesey's followers with magical charms to protect them from harm. There is also evidence that African American culture had developed its own distinctive approach to Christian ideas. African Christianity highlighted certain Old Testament themes taken from the plight of the ancient Israelites. Thus Vesey was said to have reminded his followers that God had delivered the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and would surely deliver slaves to freedom now.

Before the end of the summer of the trial, Charleston's authorities sent thirty-four blacks, including Vesey, to the gallows. The press widely reported the trial, and a transcript, including the decision and punishments meted out, was published as well. For the Charleston white elite who prosecuted Vesey, one of the lessons of the trial was that "The indiscreet zeal in favor of universal liberty,

expressed by many of our fellow-citizens in the States north and east of Maryland; aided by the Black population of those States" posed a serious threat to the institution of slavery. The sectional tensions caused by slavery and the growing animosity between Northern abolitionists, black and white, and Southern defenders of slavery would only turn more bitter in the coming decades.

Conclusion

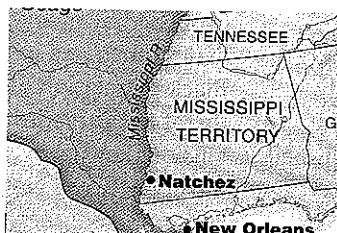
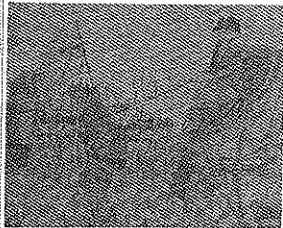
Jefferson's election in 1800 ushered in a new era in American politics. After a decade of Federalist rule, Republicans now controlled the executive and Congress. Only the judiciary remained in the hands of Federalists.

Although Jefferson stopped well short of dismantling the powerful fiscal military state created by Federalists, he did scale back the size of government. By shrinking the government, Jefferson effectively eliminated the threat posed by Hamilton's fiscal and military programs, but without having to repudiate all the accomplishments of the two previous administrations. Nor did Jefferson follow the suggestions of his most radical states' rights supporters who wished him to seriously weaken the powers of the federal government. Although Jefferson did not fully assert all the powers his predecessors had claimed, he did not divest the federal government of power that might prove useful in pursuing his own vision of America's future. Indeed, Jefferson discovered that he could put a powerful federal government to good Republican use. He came to recognize the utility of employing Hamiltonian tools to Jeffersonian ends. The purchase of Louisiana, an action entirely consistent with Hamiltonian loose construction of the Constitution, was difficult to reconcile with Jefferson's own theory of strict construction, but Jefferson put his constitutional scruples aside to make the purchase.

By the time James Madison became president, leading Republicans had adopted

much of the Hamiltonian economic agenda. America's difficult experiences during the War of 1812 seemed to underscore the wisdom of many of Hamilton's proposals. The next president, James Monroe, took these lessons to heart; his administration sought a non-partisan synthesis of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian values. The press hailed Monroe's presidency as an Era of Good Feelings, a time in which partisan rancor gave way to consensus and a new wave of nationalism. This brief respite from partisanship proved short-lived, however. Within a decade, partisan divisions resurfaced. A new two-party system emerged in which party organization and identity would become central in American culture. This new political culture was more democratic and more aggressive.

If there were conspicuous losers in the Jeffersonian era it was American Indians and slaves. The former faced a more powerful and well-organized American government eager to expand westward. The War of 1812 had a disastrous impact on Western tribes, who lost an important ally, Britain, in their struggles against the United States. Finally the cotton boom and introduction of land well suited to cotton agriculture meant that the institution of slavery became stronger. The struggles over the Missouri Compromise, Jefferson's "Fire Bell in the Night," were prophetic. The issue of slavery, particularly the expansion of slavery, would play an increasingly important role in American public life.



CHAPTER REVIEW

1800–1802

Jefferson elected president
Peaceful transfer of power from Federalists to Republicans

Sally Hemings Scandal
Jefferson is accused of having a slave mistress

1803

Louisiana Purchase
Jefferson acquires Louisiana Territory, doubling the size of the nation

Marbury v. Madison
John Marshall asserts power of Supreme Court to decide constitutionality of acts of Congress (judicial review)

1804–1811

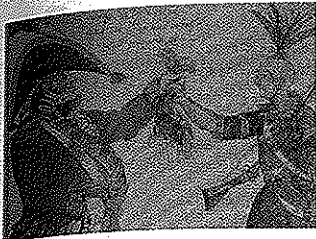
Burr and Hamilton duel
Aaron Burr kills Alexander Hamilton in a duel in 1804

Embargo Act of 1807
Jefferson implements policy of peaceful coercion

Battle of Tippecanoe, 1811
Defeat of Pan-Indian nationalist movement in Ohio and Indiana

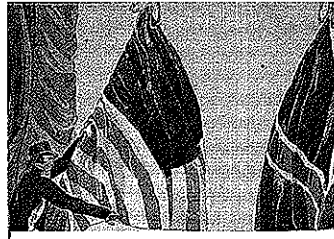
Review Questions

1. How revolutionary was Jefferson's revolution of 1800?
2. What role did honor play in the political culture of the new nation?
3. How did Jefferson's home at Monticello express his political ideals? How might critics have seen it as compromising his ideals?
4. Which features of Jefferson's domestic policy agenda were the most successful and why?
5. Why was Jefferson's second term in office more contentious than his first?
6. What were the main causes of the War of 1812? What were its most important economic consequences?
7. What was the "Era of Good Feelings"?
8. Why did Thomas Jefferson describe the Missouri Compromise as a "Fire Bell in the Night"?
9. How did the Marshall Court's decisions contribute to economic growth and development?



1812

War of 1812
United States and Britain go to war



1814–1815

Treaty of Ghent
Britain and America sign a treaty ending the War of 1812

Battle of New Orleans
Andrew Jackson and his troops defeat the British at Battle of New Orleans



1816

James Monroe elected president
Monroe inaugurates the "Era of Good Feelings"



1819–1822

Missouri Compromise
Settles the issue of slavery in the territories by drawing an imaginary line across the map of the United States and creating a permanent division between slave and free territory

Denmark Vesey charged with plotting an uprising
Slaves and free blacks in Charleston, S.C., are captured, charged with plotting an insurrection, tried, and executed

Key Terms

Louisiana Purchase The acquisition by the United States of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, thereby securing control of the Mississippi River and nearly doubling the size of the nation. 198

pan-Indian resistance movement Shawnee leaders Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh's plan to unite Indian tribes to repel white encroachments in Ohio and Indiana, thus defending indigenous lands and reasserting the traditional values of Indian culture. 200

impressment The practice of forcing merchant seamen to serve in the British navy. 202

Chesapeake Affair An incident in 1807 when the British ship the *Leopard* fired at an American navy ship, the *Chesapeake*. The British abducted four American sailors, whom they charged were deserters from the Royal Navy. 202

Embargo Act of 1807 The cornerstone of Jefferson's plan of peaceable coercion that attempted to block U.S. trade with England and France to force them to respect American neutrality. 202

War Hawks Young Republican congressmen from the South and Western regions of the

country who favored Western expansion and war with Britain. 204

War of 1812 The war fought between Britain and America over restrictions on American trade. British trade with American Indians, particularly trade in weapons, was also an issue. 204

Hartford Convention A meeting of Federalists in Hartford, Connecticut, to protest the War of 1812. The convention proposed several constitutional amendments intended to weaken the powers of the slave states and protect New England interests. 207

Era of Good Feelings A term that the press coined to describe the absence of bitter partisan conflict during the presidency of James Monroe. 209

Monroe Doctrine A foreign policy statement by President Monroe declaring that the Americas were no longer open to colonization and that the United States would view any effort to reassert colonial control over independent nations in the Western Hemisphere as a threat to America. 212

cotton gin Eli Whitney's invention for removing seeds from cotton. 212

Panic of 1819 A downturn in the American economy in 1819 that plunged the nation into depression and economic hardship. 214

Missouri Compromise The congressional compromise in which Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, and Maine was admitted as a free state to preserve the balance of slave and free states in Congress. The law also drew an imaginary line at 36° 30' through the Louisiana Territory. Slavery was prohibited north of this line. 215

Denmark Vesey Uprising

An alleged plot led by a free black man, Denmark Vesey, to free slaves in Charleston and kill their masters. 216

