



An Era of Good Feelings



In 1816, the Democratic Republican candidate **James Monroe** easily defeated his Federalist opponent, showing how seriously the Federalists had declined in popularity. Monroe was the last Revolutionary War officer to become president. He was almost 60 years old when he took office, and Americans were fond of his old fashioned ways- even his knee-length pants and powdered wigs which were no longer in fashion. In 1817, he toured the country and was met with cheering crowds. Monroe represented a united country, free of political conflict.

Monroe hoped to create a new sense of national unity. One newspaper wrote that the United States was entering an “**era of good feelings.**” By the time Monroe ran for a second term in 1820, no candidate opposed him. The Federalist Party had disappeared. Monroe urged the Federal government to guide the growth of trade and industry. The majority Republican Congress, who once supported states’ rights, now supported increased federal power.

Although conflicts between political parties declined, disputes between different sections of the nation sharpened. These disputes were the result of **sectionalism**, or loyalty to one’s state or section rather than to the nation as a whole. In Congress, three young men- who would each have key roles in Congress and beyond for more than 30 years- took center stage in these debates. These men were **John C. Calhoun** from South Carolina, **Daniel Webster** from New Hampshire and **Henry Clay** from Kentucky.

1. What was the Era of Good Feelings? _____

2. Define sectionalism: _____

How Was A Stable Economy Created After the War?

After the War of 1812, leaders had to deal with serious economic issues. Despite the nation’s great physical growth and the soaring spirits of the people, the economy faced severe problems. This was due in part to the lack of a national bank.

The carter that had set up the first Bank of the United States ran out in 1811. Without the Bank to lend money and regulate the nation’s money supply, the economy suffered. State banks made too many loans and issued too much money, called **inflation**. This decreases the value of money and causes prices to rise rapidly.

In the nation’s early years, Democratic Republicans opposed a national bank. However, by 1816, many believed that it was necessary. They supported a law to charter the second Bank of the United States, which helped to restore order to the money supply and also helped American businesses grow.

3. Why did Democratic Republicans change their opinion on a National Bank?

Competition from Britain

Another challenge facing the economy was a flood of English goods following the War of 1812. British factories often had more advanced technology and methods than American factories. This meant that they could turn out goods of higher quality and at lower prices than American factories. As a result, buyers preferred these goods.

American manufacturers called for high **tariffs** to protect their growing industries. Congress passed the **Tariff of 1816** which placed a high tax on imports. This made imported goods much more expensive for consumers and encouraged them to buy cheaper, American-made goods.

When Congress passed protective tariffs in 1818 and 1824 that were even higher than those of 1816, some Americans protested. Southerners were especially angry. They felt that the tariff protected northern manufacturers at their expense. The South had few factories, so people there saw little benefit from high tariffs. What the Southern states did see were higher prices for the goods they had to buy.

4. Why did many Americans choose British-made goods over American-made goods?

5. What is the purpose of a tariff?

6. Which section of the country did not like the protective tariffs, and why?

Creative Writing

What would Americans have said about the Tariff of 1816, and others? Pretend you are a newspaper reporter covering a story on the topic in 1816. Write a quote that someone who would have **supported** the tariff would have said. On the other side, create a quote that an **opponent** of the tariff would have said.

In support of the tariff...


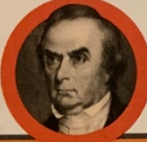

Opposed to the tariff...

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Growing Sectionalism

The tariff dispute illustrated a growing **sectionalism**- differences in the goals and interests of different parts, or sections, of the country. These differences had always existed, but now they seemed to be growing sharper and would bring an end to the Era of Good Feelings. Geography, economics and history all contributed to sectional differences in the United States. As the differences grew deeper, people wondered if sectionalism might divide the nation.

Each section of the country had a strong voice in Congress in the early 1800s. Henry Clay of Kentucky represented the West. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina spoke for the interests of the South. Daniel Webster of Massachusetts protected the interests of New England. Each leader, although nationalist, remained concerned with protecting the interests of his own section of the country.

Sectional Leaders: Calhoun, Webster, and Clay		
 JOHN C. CALHOUN	 DANIEL WEBSTER	 HENRY CLAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From South Carolina• Skilled orator, lawyer, and senator• Sectional leader and spokesman for his region (South)• Supported the War of 1812• Opposed the idea of a strong federal government• Strong supporter of slavery• Showed a concern for the country's economy• Opposed the Compromise of 1850	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From New Hampshire• Skilled orator, lawyer, and senator• Sectional leader and spokesman for his region (North)• Against the War of 1812• Supported the idea of a strong federal government• Wanted slavery abolished• Showed a concern for the country's economy• Defended the Compromise of 1850	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From Kentucky• Skilled orator, lawyer, and senator• Sectional leader and spokesman for his region (West)• Supported the War of 1812• Supported the idea of a strong federal government• Supported compromise over slavery• Showed a concern for the country's economy• Defended the Compromise of 1850

Compare and contrast:

- Who supported the War of 1812? _____
- Who wanted to get rid of slavery? _____
- Who did not support a strong federal government? _____
- What other traits or characteristics did all three men have in common?
