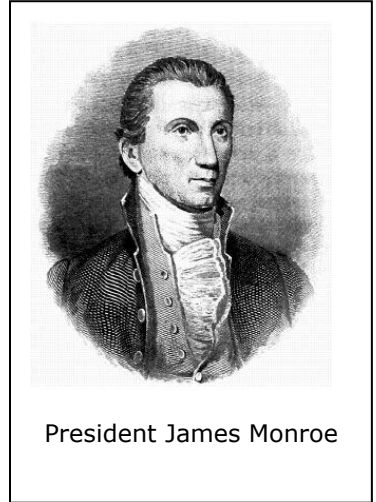


Sixteenth Congress

Dec. 6, 1819-Mar. 3, 1821

First Administration of James Monroe

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Historical Background

Towards the end of the 15th Congress, the United States had expanded its territory into Eastern Florida with the signing of the Adams-Onis Treaty on Feb. 22, 1819. In an effort to settle claims for U.S. ships seized (some 20 years prior), as well as for the loss of property by U.S. citizens, Spain agreed to cede parts of Florida to the United States in exchange for the U.S. assuming liability for \$5 million in damages. Monroe claimed, therefore, such territorial acquisition converged with providing restitution to U.S. citizens whose property was seized or damaged by Spain. At the start of the 16th Congress, he stated, “the indemnity for injuries and losses, so long before sustained, and now again acknowledged and provided for, was to be paid by them [Spain] without becoming a charge on the treasury of Spain.” Furthermore, the cession of land by Spain was “the means of indemnifying our citizens, in a considerable sum, the presumed amount of their losses.”

However, while the United States was anxious to establish a “government in Florida,” Spain delayed ratifying the treaty, which had quickly been approved by the U.S. Senate. Spain said there were two reasons for delaying ratification of the treaty: because of an attempt by the United States to alter a principle article of the treaty and that the United States “tolerated, or protected” an 1819 expedition into Texas—which was under Spain’s control—that sought to take over the territory. Monroe said the amendment to the treaty sought to annul “grants of land” that had been “recently made” by Spain, and which the United States made clear would be negated. He went on to state, “that clause was drawn for that express purpose, and none other.” In addition, the allegation that the United States “tolerated or protected an expedition against Texas” was “utterly without foundation.” Monroe added that a group of “adventurers” drew the authorities’ attention leading to some being apprehended, and the matter being adjudicated by the courts. He concluded, “these facts will, it is presumed, satisfy every impartial mind, that the Government of Spain had no justification for declining to ratify the treaty.”

House	Senate
Majority Party: Jeffersonian Republicans (160 seats)	Majority Party: Jeffersonian Republicans (37 seats)
Minority Party: Federalists (26 seats)	Minority Party: Federalists (9 seats)
Other Parties: None	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: Henry Clay; John W. Taylor	President Pro Tempore: James Barbour; John Gaillard

Following the acquisition of Florida, western expansion of the United States continued during the 16th Congress, bringing with it confrontation. As new states sought admittance to the United States, debates on the requirements for statehood grew. In 1820 the first serious dispute based on sectional differences emerged. The dispute involved the proposed admission of Missouri to the Union, potentially as a pro-slavery State, which would have threatened to upset the equilibrium that was present among the 22 existing States. An agreement was made in March 1820 in the first Missouri Compromise providing for the admission of Maine as a free State, and authorized Missouri to form a Constitution and Government with no restrictions on slavery but outlawing further slave states north of parallel 36°30'. However, it did not end the conflict as it also contained a clause forbidding free blacks and mixed-race persons from entering the new State. That clause revived the Missouri controversy with Northerners arguing that because free blacks were citizens in many States, the clause in the Missouri Constitution violated Article IV of the U.S. Constitution, which says, "The citizens of each State shall be entitled to the privileges and immunities of the citizens of the several States." As a result, a majority of the House of Representatives threatened to prevent Missouri's admission to the Union until the exclusion clause was eliminated. Early in 1821 Senator Henry Clay offered a resolution making it possible for Missouri to be admitted as a State. Under Clay's proposal, Missouri had to make a "solemn" promise it would not enact a law excluding blacks despite the stipulation in the State's Constitution allowing it to do so.

Sources:

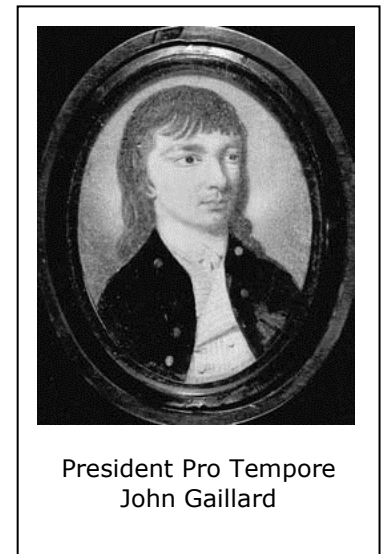
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President Pro Tempore
James Barbour



President Pro Tempore
John Gaillard

War or Peace?

Fortifications and Navy Patrols

During the 16th Congress, the United States was at relative peace both domestically and globally, according to President Monroe. Moreover, "peace ha[d] been preserved" with the tribes of Native Americans. The United States used that period of peace to build trading posts near the tribes to engage in trade, but also to exercise control over the tribes, thereby increasing the Government's ability to "protect our own settlements."

In addition to building trading posts, the United States was either planning or constructing war ships and coastal fortifications. To further the plans for coastal fortifications, a survey of the coastal areas was nearly complete, and progress had been made in gathering the materials needed to build those structures. The locations at which fortifications were under construction varied widely, ranging from the James River in Virginia, the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, near Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana, and at Niagara in New York. Like the material needed to build the fortifications, timber for ship building had been gathered, but the selection of locations for two naval depots was still being conducted. During his 1819 address, Monroe stated that the report containing the recommended locations was expected to be completed during 1820. He continued by explaining that the fortifications and other military improvement programs were all linked; they were designed to be part of a system that not only defended the coast, but also defended the interior.

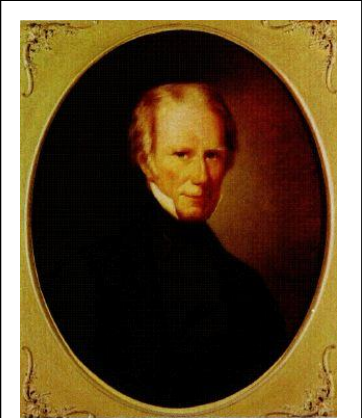
Monroe also credited Navy patrols in the Mediterranean Sea for preserving the peace with the Barbary powers in North Africa (Morocco and Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis, the latter three were provinces of the Ottoman Empire). Peace with these North African states continued to be of importance to the United States since the only recent conclusion the Second Barbary War in 1815 and the continued threat of U.S. merchant ships being seized in the Mediterranean. While ensuring the safety of U.S. merchant ships that navigated the Mediterranean was a high priority for the Navy, Monroe said Navy patrols were dispatched to areas where U.S. interests were also “of high importance.” That included along the U.S.’ Atlantic coast, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well as along the African coast in order to interdict the slave trade continuing illegally.

In addition to these concerns, there were concerns about trade in Central and South America because of the civil wars underway between Spain and its provinces in those regions. While Monroe stressed United States’ neutrality in those conflicts, he did say that the U.S. was interested in the outcome and that the rebels were winning. Monroe also suggested that Spain consider withdrawing and ceding control over those lands “should it become manifest to the world that the efforts of Spain to subdue these provinces will be fruitless.”

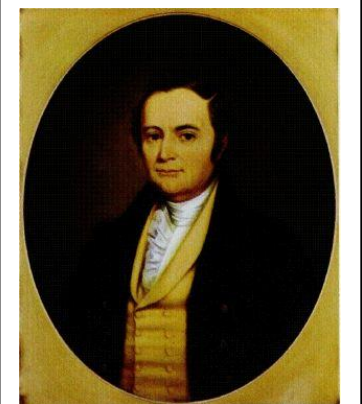
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Speaker of the House
Henry Clay



Speaker of the House
John W. Taylor

Economic Trends and Conditions

During 1819, the economy declined as indicated by reductions in both prices and wages, according to Monroe, who, during the State of the Union address

delivered on Dec. 7, 1819, hinted that the country had entered an economic depression. While lower wages were generally considered “favorable to the success of domestic manufactures,” businesses were “not shielded” by the “adverse” affects “to their prosperity” created by the drop in prices and wages. The economic decline resulted in the banks withholding capital that would otherwise have been available in the form of loans. “The reduction in the prices of the raw materials, and of labor, have compelled the banks to withdraw from them a portion of the capital heretofore advanced to them,” he said. Monroe continued by saying, “that aid, which has been refused by the banks, has not been obtained from other sources, owing to the loss of individual confidence, from the frequent failures which have recently occurred in some of our principal commercial cities.” He claimed foreign trade practices likely worsened the economic situation within the United States: “Their manufactures, for the want of a ready or profitable market at home, have been shipped by the manufacturers to the United States, and, in many instances, sold at a price below their current value,” adding it is “injurious in its effects.”

In the years following the War of 1812 trade with Great Britain was a major concern of the U.S. Government, specifically over U.S. ships being prevented from conducting commerce at West Indies’ ports. In his 1819 address, Monroe stated: “At the time of the negotiation for the renewal of the commercial convention between the United States and Great Britain, a hope has been entertained that an article might have been agreed upon mutually satisfactory to both countries, regulating, upon principles of justice and reciprocity, the commercial intercourse between the United States and the British possessions, as well in the West Indies, as upon the continent of North America.” However, by December 1819 Great Britain declined all offers for opening those ports, as provided for by the Treaty of Ghent (signed in 1814 ending the War of 1812). In response, the United States requested that a foreign sovereign who was a “common friend to both parties” be engaged as arbitrator. Nearly a year later, during the State of the Union address delivered on Nov. 15, 1820, Monroe reported that the Emperor of Russia, who had mediated the original treaty, accepted the role of arbitrator.

Trade with France was also important. In an effort to establish a system of commerce with France that was based on “reciprocity and equality,” the United States imposed new tonnage duties on French ships that were designed to “countervail” trade “inequalities.” The new tonnage duties became effective on July 1, 1820. A situation arose though, wherein French ships docked in U.S. ports having departed from France unaware of the new duties. Monroe informed Congress of the situation, so that in the spirit of “amity and conciliation,” the lawmakers could decide whether or not to grant an exemption to those ships. However, while Monroe did not openly oppose providing those ships an exemption for the new duties, the President hinted that an exemption was not appropriate saying, “It may not be proper to extend relief” to those vessels.

In the fiscal reports for 1819 and 1820, the United States’ revenues for 1819—which were only reported up to Sept. 30—were \$19 million, according to Monroe. Furthermore, the Government’s expenditures up to Sept. 30, 1819 surpassed \$18.2 million, leaving a surplus of \$2.5 million up to

that date. Monroe added that revenues for the final quarter of 1819 were expected to surpass expenditures, but he did not provide any revenue or expenditure estimates. In addition, during the fiscal report for 1820, Monroe said the United States collected more than \$16.7 million in revenues through Sept. 30 of that year, and expenditures, also up to Sept. 30, surpassed \$16.8 million. However, despite the expenditures exceeding revenues during the first nine months of 1820, at least \$1.9 million remained in the Treasury, according to Monroe, who did not provide any revenue or expenditure estimates for the last quarter of 1820. The President also reported that by Sept. 30, 1815 the U.S. debt surpassed \$119.6 million, and with interest and fees would have reached \$158 million by Sept. 30, 1820, but during that period the United States made payments of \$66.8 million on that debt, thereby reducing it to \$99.9 million.

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1819 Events

- **Feb. 6:** Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles founds the free-port harbor Singapore
- **Feb. 19:** British explorer William Smith discovers the South Shetland Islands, which are north of the Antarctic Peninsula, and claims them in the name of King George III
- **Feb. 22:** [Spain renounces its claim to Eastern Florida in exchange for the U.S. assuming liability for \\$5 million of claims](#)
- **Mar. 2:** [The territory of Arkansas is organized](#)
- **Mar. 2:** [The United States passes its first immigration law, "An act regulating passenger ships and vessels"](#)
- **April 2:** The agricultural periodical *American Farmer* begins publication
- **June 20:** The hybrid sail and steam ship *SS Savannah* arrives in Liverpool, England from Savannah, Georgia becoming the first steam powered vessel to cross the Atlantic Ocean
- **July 3:** The Bank of Savings, the first savings bank in the United States, begins operation in New York

- **July 16:** Under the commission of Russian Tsar Alexander I, Fabian Gottlieb von Bellinghausen sets sail to explore Antarctica
- **Aug. 6:** [Norwich University is founded in Vermont as the first private military school in the United States](#)
- **Aug. 7:** At the Battle of Boyacá in Colombia (then known as New Granada), Simón Bolívar defeats royalist forces thereby ensuring Colombian independence from Spain
- **Oct. 22:** The first vessels to navigate a section of the Erie Canal sail from Rome, N.Y. to Utica, N.Y.
- **Dec. 14:** [Alabama is admitted to Union as the 22nd State](#)
- **Dec. 17:** [The Congress of Angostura establishes Colombia's independence from Spain](#)

1820 Events

- **Jan. 29:** George III, King of Britain and Ireland, dies at age 81
- **Feb. 6:** [The ship Elizabeth sails from New York for Sierra Leone carrying 86 free Blacks in the first organized emigration of Blacks back to Africa](#)
- **Mar. 6:** [The Missouri Compromise passes allowing Missouri to be admitted to the United States allowing Maine to be admitted as a free state, granting Missouri authorization to form a constitution with no restriction on slavery, and prohibiting slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of 36°30'](#)
- **Mar. 15:** [Maine is admitted to the Union as the 23rd state](#)
- **Sept. 25:** French physicist Francois Arago conducts electromagnetism experiments using a voltaic cell and copper wire that he places between the poles of the cell and which reacts by attracting iron filings
- **Nov. 18:** Nathaniel B. Palmer, the captain of a U.S. ship, sights Antarctica

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Adams, John Quincy. [Documents transmitted to both Houses of Congress, with the message of the President, of 7th December 1819](#). House, Dec. 6, 1819. 16th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.2/2 (S1.1:819). ProQuest Congressional, 31 H.doc.2/2

["An Act to authorize the people of the Missouri territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union on an equal footing, with the original states, and to prohibit slavery in certain territories."](#) (3 Stat. 545, Chap. 22; Mar. 6, 1820). ProQuest Congressional

["An Act to enable the people of the Alabama territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union on an equal footing with the original states."](#) (3 Stat. 489, Chap. 47; Mar. 2, 1819). ProQuest Congressional

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Key, F. S. [Memorial of the President and Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society.](#) Senate, Feb. 1, 1820. 16th Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 38. ProQuest Congressional, 26 S.doc.38

King, W. [Petition of a convention of the people of the District of Maine, praying to be admitted into the Union as a separate and independent state, accompanied with a constitution for said state.](#) House, Dec. 8, 1819. 16th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 3. ProQuest Congressional, 31 H.doc.3

Monroe, James. [Message from the president of the United States, transmitting \[...\] the state of the war between them and Spain.](#) House, Mar. 8, 1822. 17th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc.90. ProQuest Congressional, 67 H.doc.90

Major Acts

Compromise of 1820 (Missouri). Authorized the admission of Maine into the Union as a free State. Approved March 3, 1819. (3 Stat. 544) Permitted the people of Missouri to draw up a Constitution under which they decided whether or not to permit slavery to exist within the State, and prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Purchase territories north of the line 36 30', except in Missouri. Approved Mar. 6, 1820. ([3 Stat. 545, Chap. 22](#)) Certain provisions of this Act were subsequently held unconstitutional in *Scott v. Sandford*, 19 Howard (60 U.S.) 393 (1857)

Maine Union Admission Act. Authorized the admission of the independent State of Maine from the territory of the former district of Maine in the State of Massachusetts. Approved Mar. 3, 1820. ([3 Stat. 544, Chap. 19](#))

Land Act of 1820. Provides for the sale by auction of public lands and establishes the minimum per-acre price at which those lands may be sold. Approved Apr. 24, 1820. ([3 Stat. 566, Chap. 51](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980.](#) Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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